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## NOTES OF THE WEEK

THE Royal Commission on the preservation of the London squares has begun well by deciding to sit and hear evidence in public. If ever there was a question of immediate public interest this is it. Other Commissions recommend things of importance, and their recommendations are accepted or (just as often) are not. But the legislative results of their labours descend on us like the ungentle rain from heaven, and are hardly to be distinguished from other sorts of bad weather. The inquiries of this Commission affect Londoners in their ordinary going about from day to day. Those who care for the London they live in will have an opportunity of learning how the dispute is proceeding and what seems likely to be done. Something, it is certain, must be done. We cannot have the squares which space London out and give us air blocked up by buildings. The Commission (we may feel confident) will devise some means of doing this. It will then remain for Londoners to devise means of seeing that what has already been devised is put into operation.

The Congress of the French Radical Party next week at Bordeaux will be of unusual

importance, since it will give us a fairly definite indication of the sort of government we may expect after the French general elections next spring. There seems to be very little doubt that the elections will appreciably strengthen the parties of the Left, but what is still uncertain is whether these parties will be able to reform the *Cartel des Gauches*, or whether M. Poincaré, by himself making a dramatic and last moment move towards the Left, will be able to retain the control of foreign affairs in his own hands. M. Caillaux appears to have no doubt that the franc is sufficiently stable to support a change of government, and he has outlined a political programme which should make collaboration with the Socialists relatively easy. It is, therefore, quite possible that when the Chamber meets on November 3 the Deputies, rendered critical by the present economic crisis, will turn M. Poincaré out of office instead of allowing him to push his budget through as he did last year.

While the Franco-Russian crisis following on the recall of M. Rakovsky will be solved by the appointment to Paris of M. Dovgalevsky, the former diplomatic representative in Tokio, the internal crisis in Russia seems to be coming to a

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head. Stalin, who has hitherto avoided taking very strong measures against the more important members of the Opposition, has now expelled two of its principal leaders, Preobrazhensky, a former Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and Vuiovich, until recently Secretary of the Communist International of Youth, and it is quite probable that neither Trotsky nor Zinovieff will be allowed to take part in the debates in the Red Parliament in Leningrad. It is to this body that the Public Prosecutor, Krylenko, has made an unforgettable declaration. The Bolshevik Government, he said, did not like the death penalty, and it looked forward to the moment "when a decrease in the number of its enemies would allow capital punishment to be abolished." Such a remark needs no comment.

Few people will deny that the Ambassadors' Conference was opportunist rather than just in confirming Poland's possession of Vilna after General Zeligowsky had occupied that city in 1920. But, since a small country cannot, in our present stage of civilization, always hope for justice, the fact that the Lithuanian Prime Minister, M. Valdemaras, has of late been working towards a compromise with Poland had been warmly welcomed throughout Europe. It is, therefore, a thousand pities that the Polish Government, for no very sound reason, should have arrested many prominent Lithuanians in Vilna, with the result that Lithuania has appealed to the League of Nations on the ground that "the Polish Government is putting into operation plans directed against the very existence of an independent Lithuania." The refusal to grant Mr. A. J. Cook a *visa* is doubtless due mainly to Poland's fear of Bolshevism, for the meeting he desired to attend in Warsaw was an unusually harmless one, in connexion with an inquiry into the world's coal supply. It is surely time for Poland to become friendly with at least one of her neighbours, and it would require no great concessions to allay Lithuanian regrets for the loss of Vilna.

Sympathy with the Macedonians is still so strong in Bulgaria that the Government is likely to have some difficulty in obtaining Parliamentary approval for the declaration of martial law in the two provinces where the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization is most active. And yet this is the least drastic of the measures which Bulgaria will have to take if she is to reach tolerably good relations with Yugoslavia and Greece. Unfortunately, fresh activities of the *komitajis* are reported in Yugoslav territory, and Belgrade is excited by an alleged Macedonian plot to assassinate King Alexander. Despite the anxiety of the Great Powers to keep the League of Nations from dealing with the matter, one preliminary safety measure is urgently needed—the League Council should send two neutral officers to the Yugoslav-Bulgarian frontier without delay in order to be on the spot should frontier incidents arise. There is no other way to prevent minor squabbles from being exagger-

ated until they create a danger of a new Balkan war.

Ever since Pope Pius XI, on the day of his election, appeared on the outer balcony of St. Peter's, there have been periodical rumours of a compromise between the Holy See and the Italian Government to put an end to a state of affairs which has lasted since 1870, when the Pope shut himself up in the Vatican as a protest against the loss of Temporal Power. The discussion now being carried on between the *Osservatore Romano*, the official organ of the Vatican, and the *Popolo d'Italia*, Mussolini's paper, seems clearly to indicate that agreement will soon be reached between the two parties. The Papal demand for a strip of independent territory running as far as the sea is not likely to be granted, but if the Vatican were to be accorded the ownership of the Apostolic Palaces instead of their simple use, as is at present the case, Signor Mussolini would have won the support of an immensely powerful organization to spread the doctrines of *Italianita*, and the Vatican would be able to claim a larger say in international political affairs on the recovery of its Temporal Power.

Mr. Ronald McNeill is personally so popular that it is difficult to make any criticism of his appointment as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Although he has represented the British Government at one or two League of Nations meetings, and has had considerable experience of international affairs as Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, many Governments will undoubtedly feel some regret that a younger man and one who has made a more careful study of new methods in diplomacy has not been selected to follow Lord Cecil. Major Ormsby-Gore and Major Walter Elliot, to mention only two of the younger Conservatives, have understood how to reconcile British and international interests in a manner which Mr. McNeill has perhaps still to learn. Nevertheless we have little doubt that his good humour and obvious sincerity will go far towards dispelling the widespread belief abroad that the present Government is an enemy of international co-operation through the League.

The Bishop of Birmingham, whom we criticized last March in an article entitled 'The Egregious Bishop,' is easily the most aggravating ecclesiastic in the Church of to-day. We, who are not concerned to enter into theological controversy, cannot forget the gross impropriety of his conduct in then delivering to an assembly of Dissenters a discourse in which, by implication, he derided the whole Anglican episcopate, and in which he confessed to envy of churches that have no official liturgy. But none of his offences against propriety can be held to provide an excuse for the unseemly protest made at St. Paul's against his recent religious pronouncements. There are many ways of protest, in representations to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in letters to the religious or secular Press, in public meetings, without theatrical demonstrations in a consecrated building and the display of un-Christian egotism

on an occasion of worship. Dean Inge is perfectly justified in declining all discussion with the priest who has so far forgotten reverence for St. Paul's as to desecrate it by a performance worthy of an election brawl.

When the Secretary of State for War postponed his visit to India in order to answer the criticism evoked by the scheme of Army reorganization, it was somewhat rashly assumed that the scheme would not be brought into force until criticism had been met in the House of Commons. But the changes, announced for the beginning of October, have been introduced in the middle of the month, so far as they relate to the War Office: the changes outside the War Office, it is understood, will be effected at the end of the year. The Secretary of State for War, it seems, is not to be deflected from his policy by any criticism already heard or in prospect. That reorganization is necessitated by the development of a mechanized army is not in dispute, but some of the soundest and most experienced of those soldiers who have special knowledge of the subject object strongly to that policy to which the Secretary of State has committed himself, and we cannot see any adequate reason for the obstinacy with which he holds on his way in a matter very insufficiently discussed.

Out of the scandalous cases in which men of good character, subsequently vindicated on appeal, were condemned on unsupported Police evidence came a strong demand for an inquiry into the handling of such cases. How does Sir William Joynson-Hicks meet that demand? By appointing a committee to inquire primarily into something else, and by explaining that its appointment is in response, not to public indignation over the Murray and Champaign cases, but to representations made by women's organizations regarding solicitation and other offences against public decency. In a politician of another temper we should call this cynicism. With Sir William Joynson-Hicks we must describe it as a well-intentioned blunder. There is an argument for looking into the conditions under which women suspected of solicitation are charged, but that matter is not urgent, and the issues raised by the Murray and Champaign cases are. The public will not acquiesce in the delay and confusion of issues consequent on the decision taken by the Home Secretary. What is needed is not an inquiry ranging over all problems of decency but a specific investigation of the methods illustrated in two definite and shocking cases. The committee appointed seems to be open to no criticism as regards its personnel; but Sir William Joynson-Hicks must reconsider its terms of reference or prepare himself for vigorous objections from a public anxious for prompt reform in a matter much narrower than that to which he has directed the inquiry.

There are disquieting rumours abroad concerning the conclusions of the Home Secretary's Departmental Committee on the remains of the D.O.R.A. Regulations as to shop-closing. It

has been whispered that no change is to be made in a system which has met with almost universal condemnation. There are, however, reasons for thinking that the Committee will eventually arrive at a conclusion more consonant with common sense. These regulations have been under criticism now for some years. They have found a little sectional support, but the public at large has been loudly and determinedly against them. The arguments for them are easy to understand: we must (and this is all it comes to) protect shop-assistants against the rapacity of their employers. But the method of doing this so haphazardly arrived at by these regulations (which were instituted for quite another purpose) has now had a long trial and leaves the bulk of the community gravely dissatisfied and inconvenienced. There are other methods, and the time has come to explore their possibilities.

The latest report of the Ministry of Labour on wage-rates now prevalent offers a great deal of food for thought. Wages, it seems, are greatly advanced since August, 1914, and have on the average at least kept pace with the increased cost of living. But the general average is a very deceptive thing. In some occupations, the wage-earner is decidedly better off than he was, in others he is not. In some cases the percentage increase is over a hundred, in others it is no more than forty-five. This does not say much for the achievements of the Trade Union movement as a whole in improving the position of the working-classes as a whole. The truth is that working-class "solidarity" is still largely an illusion. The different Trade Unions compete against one another with as much enthusiasm as against the capitalist, and regard one another with as much jealousy. It would be interesting to know how much in the way of wage increases has been obtained by Trade Union action and how much by the general pressure of industrial development.

The forthcoming meeting of the Railway Rates Tribunal does not inspire the same feelings of fear as were caused by similar deliberations during, and just after, the war. We know that our railway rates cannot be raised any further: opinion would be too strongly against it and would express itself in a very practical manner. But it inspires no hope either. It will make the general arrangements rather tidier than they have been. Some habitual travellers will in the process gain a little, some will lose a little, but the general body will remain untouched. This is perhaps something to be thankful for, but not too vociferously. Railway travelling should be cheaper in this country. The grouping of the railways has hardly produced the results that the public at large expected from it. It is cheaper in Germany than it is here, though the German State Railways have to produce a considerable profit towards the sums payable under the Dawes Scheme. There is still room for improvement in the whole of our railway system. The post-war reorganization was carried out in a hurry and there are reasons for thinking that something better might be devised at leisure.



## NATIONAL ECONOMY

THE Cabinet Committee on Finance is understood to have resumed its sittings, and from time to time we shall have comforting statements about its work. But even the best of us are beginning to praise economy as we praise the beauty of a virtuous life. It is becoming a pious aspiration for Sundays, only to be indulged when it does not interfere with ordinary political business. The Labour Party neither preaches economy, nor, if it were returned to power, does it propose to practise it. Liberals deplore high expenditure, but they have never given the slightest indication of how it is to be reduced. Conservatives as a Party have the strongest interest in economy, but so far such suggestions as they have made are either unpractical or trivial. It is not possible to cut down the social services, and all the charwomen and half the second-class clerks in Whitehall might be sacked without making any appreciable difference in the National budget. That administrative waste should be cut down is, we assume, common ground with all parties; but on a liberal estimate there is not more than a million or two to be saved that way. Economy on a scale which would make a difference to our income tax payments, or to the cost of living, is impossible without drastic changes in policy.

We shall proceed presently to state what changes might make a difference. They are so deep and far-reaching that no opinion can confidently be expressed about any of them, except that they would be bitterly unpopular and strongly opposed by important and deserving sections of the community. We must not be understood to advocate them as desirable in themselves, and if we mention them it is by way of example rather than of precept or prescription. But on this subject it is necessary to clear our minds of cant. There is no easy short cut to economy that will make no enemies and arouse no opposition; and if Conservatives are not prepared to employ heroic remedies, then the less they talk about economy the better their reputation for sincerity will be.

It is an old and not entirely flippant maxim that the best way to increase one's income is to live beyond it. In private businesses there are two methods of effecting economies, not necessarily conflicting, and indeed frequently employed together. One is to cut down costs, the other is to spend more money in new and more profitable directions. The more enterprising form of economy is to spend more and in such a way as to increase profits. The difficulty in applying this second method to State business is that its profits are kept in a different set of books from its expenditure, and are most of them invisible and immeasurable in terms of money. For example, the money spent on improving the happiness and welfare of the people figures in our national accounts as expenditure and is easily assessable in terms of taxation. But the money is not lost. It is expended by the beneficiaries and helps to stimulate the home market. By increasing contentment it increases also the stability and strength of the country and in strictly commercial books would be shown as appreciation of capital or carried forward to reserve. And so with other forms of national expenditure.

A very large proportion of the money raised by taxation, provided it be wisely spent, is also invisible profit, which comes back in part to those who pay the taxes, though it may be very differently distributed. Taxation is, in fact, redistribution rather than a subtraction of the wealth of the country. The argument for economy is not that the money so raised is lost but that spending diverted from private into public hands tends to diminish enterprise and industry and to encourage then what we may call the Civil Service habit of mind, which does everything well but neither produces nor creates. It fosters the home and protected trades at the expense of those which are unprotected and have to meet foreign competition. That is the root of the evil of high taxation. Obviously, there is only one way by which the State can produce revenue which not being derived from taxation does not produce these bad effects, and that is by itself engaging in the production of wealth. To a limited extent it already does this in the Post Office, but the extension of these profit-earning activities of government is limited by the strong objection to socialistic enterprise.

In these reflections on national economy we leave out the vigilant pruning of waste, because necessity for that is, we may repeat, common ground with all parties and raises no controversial issue. But the total that can be saved by the mere tightening up of departmental efficiency is, after all, quite small by comparison. It has been pointed out over and over again that reduction of expenditure on a great scale is necessarily restricted to a comparatively small area of the national budget. Unless we are prepared to confiscate, either openly or under some specious disguise (and no Conservative or Liberal proposes that), the whole of the debt is inviolable. Equally inviolable are the war pensions and the expenditure on social legislation in which (quite apart from all other considerations) there is an element of contract not to be dissolved except by mutual consent. If we go through the Budget item by item, as Mr. Churchill has done more than once, we shall soon be driven to the conclusion that outside the belligerent services there is no possibility of economy on the great scale which would have an appreciable effect in reducing taxation. We may discover new taxes, but we shall be lucky if they do more than enable us to keep pace with the automatic tendency of expenditure to rise. Mr. Churchill's new taxes have not even succeeded in doing that.

Education is sometimes talked of as a field for economy, but while there is good reason to think that we do not get full value for our expenditure, the trouble is, not that we spend too much or more than can usefully be spent on education, but that we spend it on the wrong things. It is easy to indicate some forms of educational expenditure which might be cut out in favour of more useful forms, but we merely deceive ourselves by pretending that there are any appreciable net economies that can be made in education. All inquiry serves to bring us back to the same point, that outside the expenditure on the fighting services little retrenchment is possible. And even here it is an enormously difficult practical problem, which most of those who have gone into it have given up in despair. The increasing use of machines in the Army might make it possible to



economize in men without loss of administrative efficiency, but machines too are costly, and unless we can transfer their provision to capital account the economies by mechanizing the Army would be heralded by an enormous rise of expenditure for a few years. Moreover, machines speedily become obsolete and military thought on the mechanization of war is still only inchoate, and ideas change from year to year.

No military disarmament, again, on the Continent of Europe would enable us to reduce the size of our Army, which is fixed not by political conditions in Europe, but by our commitments in our dependencies. It is possible that in time the Dominions might give us assistance in the normal garrison work of places like India, Egypt, and Hong-Kong, and a great saving might be made by the abolition of the Cardwellian system of linked battalions and the formation of a separate long-service and foreign service army. But all these reforms are not merely highly controversial but cannot in their nature be forced. The chances of economy in the expenditure on the Navy and the Air Forces are similarly contingent on great and revolutionary changes of policy. The failure at Geneva showed how difficult agreement on naval disarmament is. In our opinion no serious naval economies are possible so long as the Navy is responsible for keeping open our communications overseas. Only the abolition of war on commerce would make reduction possible. We would not rule that out; but it would be an immense and revolutionary change only to be carried after long and embittered controversy. But—the truism applies to all proposals for reduction of expenditure—he who wishes the end must also wish the means.

### "STUNT"

A WOMAN who professed to have swum the Channel has made the whole popular Press of this country ridiculous. As Lord Birkenhead pointed out in his speech at a Press charity banquet, papers which "stunt" cross-Channel swimming and cross-Atlantic flying have themselves to blame. There are very few persons indeed who would contemplate the minor exploit if not assured of immense though ephemeral notoriety and the extreme danger of cross-Atlantic non-stop flights would probably be an effective deterrent if there were not the prospect of Press adulation. We are not called upon to discuss at length the bad taste, to call it nothing worse, of the woman swimmer's hoax, or the perils incurred to no great purpose in attempts to fly across the Atlantic. What we are bound to dwell upon is the habit of mind produced by newspaper "stunting" of exceptional feats. One need not be a superior person to deplore the work the popular newspapers are doing in these matters. One need not deny papers liberty to deal with sensational, or with utterly frivolous, events. But a civilized community will require of its papers that they should exhibit some sense of values and of relevancy; and the public of to-day is being trained to enjoy the stupidest confusion and perversion of values, the most idiotic irrelevancy.

No sooner has some man or woman done a thing without precedent than the "stunt" Press

bursts into yells of rejoicing, without pausing for a moment to consider whether the feat adds anything worth while to human knowledge or hope of beneficial progress, and the yelling often drowns the whisper in which some genuinely significant achievement in art or science or industry is announced. But Providence is not so kind towards the popular papers as to produce the unprecedented every week. On the contrary, and in ironical consequence of newspaper ecstasies over a particular type of feat, the thing that was done last week is just the thing which many attempt this week. To-day's marvel, then, cannot be boomed as unprecedented. The woman is not the first woman, let us say, to swim the Channel. No matter; she is the first actuary's aunt to swim it, or the first mother, or the first—well, perhaps not the first daughter, but at any rate the first person in some category, to the discovery of which the Press lends its great resources. Almost certainly she has a second cousin who can be photographed, or a pet cat awaiting her return from dangers overcome. She has views on marriage, or on the use of lipsticks, or on the future of Christianity. In some way or other she can be exploited, and exploited she is, till the nine days' wonder is over. All of which may be gratifying to her, and is certainly profitable to the papers, but what of the effect of this kind of thing, week after week, year after year, on a public already corrupted by three decades of "stunt" journalism and by the worse films?

It is not as if there were many correctives. It is continually being impressed on immature and thoughtless minds that film stars and bruisers earn incomes beyond the dreams of avarice. They are presented on almost every side with the spectacle of first things put last and last things put first. If one of the papers engaged in asking its readers what they know could secure from them really candid replies to the question what they considered the greatest achievements of our time, the results would be such as to shock educated people. The newspapers do ill when they add to the gross confusion of values by promoting to eminence persons who have done nothing really significant, and by insinuating that everything capable of being related, however remotely, to those heroes and heroines is of concern to a sane mind. But with this kind of folly there has come in another, and in an age which prides itself on being democratic nothing is commoner than the caption or poster announcing that the victim of an accident is nephew of a peer or possesses some similarly cogent claim to public attention. In truth, the world as presented by the average popular newspaper of to-day is a world in which hardly anything is given its due place, in which almost everything pressed on the reader's attention is thrust forward on some false theory of what matters. One may shrug one's shoulders in the belief that all this is of no consequence, but that the cumulative effect on the popular mind is considerable and deplorable cannot be doubted. The stuff that is crammed down the public throat as all-important is not without recommendation; this is an advance in science, that a notable evidence of progress, and something else reveals new capacities in mankind. The popular conception of art, of science, of civilization is thus being hopelessly distorted.

## A LETTER FROM OXFORD

Oxford, October 18, 1927

ON the day on which this letter appears in print a meeting is to be held in the Sheldonian to inaugurate an Oxford Preservation Trust. It has been hailed with the usual uncritical enthusiasm; it occurs to no one to inquire why such a body should be proposed, or what right it has to exist. By logic, by custom, and by statute the preservation of Oxford's amenities is the duty of the Corporation—on which, it should not be forgotten, the University is officially represented by three aldermen and nine councillors. When a Corporation cannot or will not perform its clear duty there is a lot to be said for dissolving it and appointing paid commissioners—an expedient which has changed Dublin from the worst to one of the best administered cities in the British Isles, and has cleared up with notable efficiency the mischief done in England by unsatisfactory Boards of Guardians.

The principle of self-government is well enough, but an illusion that its mystic merits will suffice for salvation, however paltry and incompetent its workings are allowed to become, is what has brought Italy under the Mussolini yoke. What would be said of a Corporation which did its financial duty so badly that an outside committee had to be formed to retrieve the city's credit, or its sanitary duty so badly that the citizens had to band together privately to have the streets swept? That is a precise analogy to the present situation in the much more important and enduring matter of Oxford's amenities—in fact they are actually worse off, for by any standard of taste that we should not be ashamed to acknowledge the Oxford worth saving is already irretrievably lost. It will not be a consultation, but a coroner's inquest at the Sheldonian. When Oxford has been fairly smothered through sheer negligence under a mass of execrable modern villas, modern factories, and yelling hoardings they form a committee to preserve her:

... When nothing's left that's worth defence  
We build a magazine.

Why is Heidelberg, with the same population as Oxford and only a fraction of her history and ancient buildings, so infinitely pleasanter a town, with innumerable walks leading through the woods within a few minutes of its heart, and no straggling girdle of slovenly buildings to ruin the effect? Or Bonn? Of its kind Oxford's setting was no less beautiful. There is a widespread delusion that the conspicuous superiority of, for instance, the German cities is due to some mysterious good taste of the German people. Actually no one shows such a total insensibility to aesthetic outrages as the average German; the simple explanation is that these towns are in the hands of elaborately trained paid administrators instead of a clique of shopkeepers, retired colonels and clergymen or petty politicians like ours.

Oxford people have sinned deeply in the past and are sinning as deeply as ever now; they have yet to realize that the next generation will justly look back on them with the same disgust and contempt as we look back upon the deans who called in Wyatt to lay hands on their cathedrals, or the ignorant parsons who flung some of our finest ancient brasses on the dung-heap. It seems a facile solution to convoke a new outside committee, but sooner or later the fact must be faced that a town cannot serve two masters, however feeble they both are. If further spoliation is really to be prevented (which seems at present unlikely) either the Corporation must take up its clear duty of adequately controlling the growth of the city, or it must give place to an authority that will. Of course it is not practical politics yet to dissolve an English Corporation (though Walthamstow lately lost a charter for a lesser dereliction), but it may be soon if the policy of drift goes on, and then the Philistine com-

mittees which cannot see a couple of years ahead will have to look out for themselves. The results of the same *laissez-faire* a hundred years ago are now too plain for similar negligence to be tolerated indefinitely. No doubt elaborate sophistries will be used to show that the Trust is concerned only with matters outside the Corporation's province, but nothing can alter the fact that if the Town Council had not let the situation get entirely out of hand, no such Trust would be called for.

The number of undergraduates up this term will not be known till after to-morrow's matriculations; judging by appearances Oxford is even fuller than last year, and the proportion of freshmen stranded out of college in remote lodgings is a disturbing feature of the term. Builders, as well as Americans, were busy in Oxford through the Long Vacation, though leisurely enough to have left most of the operations to be finished during term. The new Rhodes Building is rising in the Warden of Wadham's grubbed-up garden; the transformation of Parker's bookshop in the Broad is nearly complete, and minor alterations and additions might be chronicled in many colleges, particularly Trinity's new library, designed by the President. New bio-chemical laboratories are to be opened this week. But Peckwater Quad in Christ Church remains parti-coloured still; half old and mouldering, half brand-new from restoration—a poor tribute to the quality of Headington stone.

The programme at the Playhouse includes the usual Shaw, Barrie, and Strindberg, but the remaining plays show perhaps as much enterprise as the finances of such a theatre will allow. Mr. Fagan, we hear, has been complaining of lack of undergraduate support and appealing for more of it; he might appeal in a more telling quarter by doing something about his seats. The 2s. 4d. seats—and a great many undergraduates are not prepared to pay more to see the average Playhouse show—are so purgatorial that "the flicks" always have it, except on those rare occasions when the delight of the spirit seems likely to compensate for the certain torment of the flesh. Not only are they hard and fixed, with so little room in front or alongside that there is no alternative to a bolt upright position exceedingly distasteful to undergraduates, but as there is no central aisle and women are a strong majority of the audience, once in, escape is all but impossible until the bitter end. What right has Mr. Fagan to complain if his potential audience are thus compelled to see monotonous American films over and over again?

## GEORGE HERBERT AT BEMERTON

By T. EARLE WELBY

IF the Nonesuch Press, which has now produced a beautiful edition of George Herbert's poems,\* beautiful in spite of a rubrication that seems to me unhappy, had issued it eighteen months ago! For it would have been a volume to take with me when I visited Bemerton, going there from Salisbury. The Close of Salisbury, and I was staying in the Close, is beautiful, with a suggestion of ordered religious life going on through the centuries, without interruption; but the cathedral, impressive enough as to its exterior, seemed to me a cathedral with no inner meaning. If anything is to be proclaimed in such a cathedral, surely it must be the omnipotence of God or His wisdom, not His mystery, His love, His nearness to us. But in the tiny church at Bemerton, kept much as it was in George Herbert's time, or perhaps restored to that condition, there was an atmosphere, to be felt, I am sure, by anyone not utterly insensible, of sacred intimacy, of a mystery

\* 'The Temple.' By George Herbert. Nonesuch Press. 31s. 6d.



without terror, of simple acceptance of those symbols through which men aspire to apprehend God. At Bemerton, as nowhere else in my experience, it seemed that entering or leaving the church was no more than a change from one part to another of a garden all the fruits of which testify to God. At Bemerton there is no question of asserting, to an indifferent world, God's claim on man; there is the simple assurance that it is impossible to live without God.

George Herbert, whose influence pervades the church, and has moved a later generation to the beauty of an epitaph on a recent rector—his loving care, we are told, embraced the people of his parish, the flowers of his garden, and the stones of the church—was far other than the portrait of him in the stock histories of our literature. That picture of a pious person engaged in the solemn game of writing stanzas which, suitably indented, shall represent altars or angels' wings does him grave injustice. He died a young man, and he had known the world, and he kept a vivid recollection of all the worldly beauty from which he had withdrawn himself as well as an appreciation of the natural beauty which he might still relish. It was no morality-monger who spoke in those marvellous lines:

I know the ways of Pleasure, the sweet strains,  
The lullings and the relishes of it;  
The propositions of hot blood and brains;  
What mirth and music mean; what love and wit  
Have done these twenty hundred years and more;  
I know the projects of unbridled store:  
My stuff is flesh, not brass; my senses live.

Protestantism, whatever may be said for it, is not a mode of Christianity likely to produce the finest religious poetry; there is a great gulf between the ardour of a Crashaw and the thin-lipped utterance of a Keble. But with George Herbert, at his best, the emotions of Anglicanism are expressed in the true poetic way, a way so far removed from that of the hymn-writer, the producer of merely edifying verse. He is very unequal, and in part of his work he forgets that if poetry is to witness to God it can be only through success in an ambition proper to it; but from time to time he writes, perhaps no more than a stanza, never more than a short poem, in which the passion for unity with God is a poetic no less than a religious passion:

How should I praise Thee, Lord, how should my rhymes  
Gladly engrave Thy love in steel,  
If what my soul doth feel sometimes  
My soul might ever feel!

In such passages George Herbert may seem comparable with those great Spanish mystics of whose poems of divine love Mr. Symons has made wonderful translations; but though Crashaw is truly comparable, and even Herrick, wearing his religion on the whole rather lightly, might be drawn into the comparison, George Herbert remains English. His sensuousness is wholly without fever, his sorrow when God is *Deus absconditus* has nothing of that feminine, sensual pang. His stuff, as he says, is flesh, not brass; his senses live; but he knows the love of God as entirely wholesome, is happily ignorant of the maladies of love, has no unholy knowledge, none of the subtleties and revulsions and self-torturing impulses which in Coventry Patmore bewilder and pain the lover of the Unknown Eros no less than any analytical and imaginative lover of a human being. Here is no instance of sensuousness sanctified by mere transference of desire to a divine lover; it is in itself saintly, and proof that, for all Puritanism may urge, every "nerve of delight," so that it be sensitive enough, is sacred. The final thing in George Herbert, at least to my mind, is that stanza of 'The Flower' into which he seems to have concentrated most of himself:

And now in age I bud again,  
After so many deaths I live and write;  
I once more smell the dew and rain,  
And relish versing: O, my only Light,  
It cannot be  
That I am he  
On whom Thy tempests fell all night.

How characteristic that he should not distinguish between sensuous and spiritual revival! And how easy it is to believe in their identity at Bemerton, in that little church in which George Herbert ceases to be a problem, and in which his way of life is felt to be the result of no forced renunciation but of genius, for life as well as literature, taking its opportunity naturally.

## FAIR'S FAIR

BY GERALD GOULD

THERE was of course—there must have been—the lady who married in Pest and repented at Buda. A similar dissimilarity was noticed by Mr. Kipling between Clapham and Martaban. In other words, this marriage-business is complicated by history and geography as well as by morality. As if morality were not enough!

I was never one to pursue the study of anthropology. But from stray glances into vast volumes about totem and taboo, I conclude that, like all studies, it is pretty horrid. Endogamy and exogamy, those great twin brethren of the laws of matrimony, must darken counsel without materially brightening life. A spectre of prohibition must brood over every moment of wooing, wedding and repudiating. You must—or you must not—marry into your own circle. The economic issue also asserts itself. Husband will purchase wife, or wife husband. No doubt there are islands where the natives, misinterpreting Freud, marry as well as eat their mothers. Cannibalism lends an alternative significance to the desire of the flesh, and one man's mate is another man's poison.

We are taught nowadays that it is all wrong to believe in the simplicity of savages. The legend of their nobility went long ago: that was part of the frilly sophistication of the eighteenth century. And now the legend of their dull nescience goes after it. They are, it seems, beset by codes and currencies in comparison with which the monogamy and adultery of western civilization are as simple as twice two. I do not question the fact: but I think I detect a flaw in the logic. It is not the code that makes for complexity: it is the power to break it. The simple life is the life limited by laws. Nothing is so complicated as freedom. Your savage (there are as many kinds of savage as of sausage, I know: and when I say "your savage," I mean at the moment mine)—your savage, then, is coerced by his totem's tyranny. He is the slave of apprehension. He is moral (if you can call it moral), and virtuous (though I should hesitate to call it virtuous) from fear of consequences. So are many people who describe themselves as Christians.

Life, I repeat, is simple for such. If your native of Clapham believed that his father-in-law would appear to him as a spirit in the night, to punish any act of marital infidelity with fire and assegai, his course would be clear. He would not have a high motive for remaining faithful; but faithful he would in fact remain. So, in similar circumstances, would a man who believed in the penalty of hell's eternal fire.

The number of people who believe in that diminishes daily. Rules, conventions, bulwarks,



landmarks, dislimn and disappear. It is boasted or bewailed in press or pulpit. Two bishops, three musical comedy actresses, five jockeys and thirty-four channel-swimmers would form a committee to discuss the problem, and a quorum to solve it. But, obstinately, it remains unsolved. Why should not a mere literary gent have a word? I feel quite unhindered by the fact that so many literary gents have had words already. I am not Mr. Arnold Bennett, to analyse the charm of womanhood; but I do know what is the matter with marriage.

The matter with marriage is that husband and wife expect to understand each other, and don't. "And do you call that novel?" asks my interlocutor. I do call it novel—as far as you can expect novelty of anything. That is to say, it has often been made clear, and needs to be made clear again. Generally, when people talk of misunderstanding in marriage, they imply that there ought to be understanding. But there ought not to be understanding, because no impossibility can be an obligation. "You must in common fairness admit," says the exasperated husband to the exasperating wife—or, *mutatis mutandis, vice versa*. But there is no such thing as common fairness. There is no such thing as fairness, common or uncommon. No such thing, that is, as a judgment exempt from the inclinations of individuality, from ancient predispositions of blood and nerve, eluding the observation of those whom they control. You can do a lot in this world, but you cannot be fair. You can make allowances: but you can never make allowances for having to make allowances.

Let me illustrate the point, not from matrimony but from the serious game of bridge. My partner, the other night, offered a call which I am bound—speaking entirely without prejudice and merely in the cause of truth—to describe as bad. After some contributory calling of my own, for which I cannot bring myself to blame myself, he was doubled, and we went five hundred down. Five hundred! Now, I am the best-tempered bridge-player alive, and my manners are perfect, whereas my partner is a notorious scoundrel; beats his mother; was expelled from Eton, Harrow, Oxford and Cambridge; and has been blackballed at the Junior Carlton, the National Liberal, and the Fabian Nursery. It was agreed between us that the dispute should be referred to a newspaper expert, and the drafting of the letter was left to me. I did it with fairness, as human fairness goes; but I did not do it fairly. I made no mention of his mother: touched lightly on the police-court cases: and scarcely altered his hand. But he was not satisfied; and I realize why he was not satisfied.

O holy state of matrimony—*de te fabula!* As well expect the two knights in the old story to see the same side of the shield, as expect two human beings, within or without the bonds of wedlock, to possess the same point of view about anything. When you read a newspaper, you know where you are; but husbands are not headlines, nor wives wires. You cannot read a spouse as you read a special. Nobody was ever an open newspaper to anybody. When you see: "Amazing fire in Pimlico," you know that there has been a fire in Pimlico; and when you see: "Alleged scandal in high life," you know there has been a scandal in

high life. But in marriage, amazement and allegation qualify and signify. There is always the unexplored beyond the known. Understanding is impossible. Let me to the marriage of true minds admit every sort of impediment. We do not, however, marry with our minds, nor merely with our bodies. We cannot have agreement, nor fair play, nor equality, nor balance. For success in marriage we must look to—what?

To something more than mind or body. To something beyond and above understanding. To something that rejects the lore of nicely calculated equal or unequal. To something transcending balance and agreement. To something proud, generous, spontaneous and complete. To something that neither asks questions nor drives bargains. To something fairer than fair.

And nobody could say fairer than that.

## A NOTE ON NOVELS

By J. B. PRIESTLEY

I SUDDENLY remembered this morning that there was a time, neighbouring my fourteenth birthday, I imagine, when I could not read any story that had a bearded hero. If I discovered that a man did not shave, I took no further interest in his fortunes. I had no prejudice against beards themselves and had no objection to a few minor characters being decked with them, but the hero had to show his chin to the world. Possibly this was because I was then (as now) something of an egoist, turned every romance into a day-dream and every hero into myself, and felt that any action, however heroic, was not beyond me except that of growing a beard. There are a score of possible explanations, and I will accept any of them; but if this page should meet the eye of some devotee of the unconscious who wishes to present me with an Oedipus complex, I trust he will believe me when I say that my father had no beard.

This whim of mine shut me off from a good deal of entertaining fiction, and I remember the struggle I had sometimes when I met a beard half-way through a good story. The hero, a perfectly eligible, smooth-faced fellow, would decide to visit the gold-fields of Australia or California, and, once there, would most unfairly let his whiskers grow. One of my favourite authors at that time was Guy Boothby and it happened that he had an illustrator—I think his name was Stanley Wood—who had a passion for drawing extraordinarily broad and yet angular men and for furnishing them all with beards. I had a trick of arguing away these beards, pretending that the artist had made a mistake and that my hero was still clean-shaven or merely moustached. This enabled me to finish the yarn in peace.

Remembering this strange whim, I began to ask myself if I still entertained prejudices of the kind, not, you will understand, in my occasional capacity of a solemn critic, poring over the world's masterpieces, but in my capacity as an ordinary reader of fiction, as a man who takes an armful of stories up to bed with him when a cold is obviously on its way. I found that I had dozens of prejudices, whims and odd tastes that prevent me from enjoying all manner of stories. A genius, of course, could break down these

little barriers, so that it is useless to point to some masterpiece and to tell me I am denying myself the joy of appreciating it. I am not referring now to masterpieces but to the common pleasant stuff of fiction that we gulp down in bed, in other people's houses, in the smoking rooms of hotels, the spoils of Mudie. And now that I no longer write reviews of novels, I can afford to give these prejudices an airing, and I hope that other people will give theirs one too. You could contrive a good new parlour game (I delight in parlour games so long as they do not demand a positively inhuman knowledge of the rivers and mountains of the world) out of the making of such lists. Here is mine, in genuine higgledy-piggledy order.

But first, let me say at once that I no longer object to bearded heroes and am even prepared to welcome them. Such prejudices as I have now are not hirsute, though I am not sure whether a bald heroine would be altogether to my taste. She would have to be presented very sympathetically, and be be-wigged in the illustrations. But to begin. I do not like political novels, with their brilliant maiden speeches, their country-house intrigues, their unreal Prime Ministers: they never come off and they would not be very amusing even if they did. Now financial or commercial stories nearly always do come off, and I cannot understand why more of them are not written. Why doesn't somebody write the epic of Palethorpe and his sausages? I do not like the last-of-the-old-family novel, with its mortgages and home farms and rows of solicitors and bailiffs, though there are more modern types of novels I dislike more. Nor do I care for the more humble rural stories, especially those that relate, with a bewildering wealth of dialect, the adventures of farm-labourers and milkmaids in the ten-acre field. The worst of these are always set in the West Country. It is fatal to take me down to Devon or Cornwall. As soon as I find somebody saying "Ess fay," I put down the book. Cornwall particularly is the novelist's Waterloo. Try to tell me of the wild Pendragons, those men of gorse and granite, and I tell you at once to go away. There is, no doubt, a wonderfully wise old fisherman up your sleeve; but I do not want him. I do not know what part of Southern England it is that allows its rural population to say "thic" and "they" for "this," "these" or "those," but I do know that I never want to read about it again. Neither thic novels nor they novels give me any pleasure. On the other hand, I have no liking for the other extreme, the cosmopolitan, this-week-in-Vienna-and-next-week-in-Paris stories, which seem to be usually about Foreign Office people or famous international musicians. I care nothing for such musicians, and the only Sanger's Circus that pleases me is the one that Lord George wrote about. But all novels about geniuses are a mistake, unless they are written by geniuses; you have to take too much on trust; you have the antics without the fiddling.

I detest the story that tells me how she was determined to live her own life and to escape from her dreadful environment. There are hundreds of these stories produced every year in America. They begin with the child in the dreary Middle Western town, sneer away the life of her parents, show her taking to Shaw and Wells, being expelled from Little Oshkosh College, and then taking a train

to Chicago or New York to live her own life, which is always made up of names of authors and artists that neither she nor her creator knows anything about, references to quite unreal lovers, and rows of dots. I trust I shall never meet her again. That kind of story is not the fashion with us now. In its place we have the novel that shows us a group of young mushy selfish aesthetes, all provided with incomes but never with bones, who slop about through chapter after chapter, determined to have every sensation that life can offer except those connected with work and affection and decency and a sense of humour. It is queer, but the literary or artistic life does not make a good subject for fiction. I do not like to find novelists writing stories about novelists: it seems a species of cannibalism. Artists and sculptors make poor heroes, too. Studio life in general cuts a poor figure in fiction. On the other hand, stage life, which ought in theory to cut a worse figure, never fails to amuse me in a novel.

Now for a general round-up of odd prejudices. The plot I dislike most is that which deals with the struggles of a monk or a priest or some other sworn celibate who happens to have fallen in love. I cannot be bothered by such people. Nor do I want to be pestered by clergymen who suffer agonies because they are not allowed to wear the kind of chasuble they like, nor by women who have about ten husbands and lovers and set off for the Far East in the last chapter, saying they want something more out of life (they want work and a heart), nor by beautiful young men who are described carefully taking themselves from one exquisite place to another, but are for ever suffering deeply because they cannot find a carpet to match their pale blue vases. All novels that turn upon what is called by the publishers "a powerful situation"—which means that the judge is the father of the young man in the dock—I contrive to avoid. In the same company of the unread may be found those novels that are said to be "terrible indictments" of something or other. No man ever wrote a good novel by terribly indicting anything. But neither did any man ever write a good novel by talking about life in the ultra-public school and Indian Army manner, calling every man who ever had the least gleam of an idea "one of your long-haired cads" and treating all young women (the dear little girls) as if they were dolls. Titles are important. It is a good rule (admitting of the usual exceptions) to steer clear of all novels that have titles that are nothing but familiar quotations cut down: "To Be or Not," "That Bourne From Whence," "Can Spring Be Far," "Creeps In This Petty," "Leave Not a Rack," this is the trick of it, and now when I see such labels I always assume they are attached to thoroughly silly stories.

Is that all? It is not, but it is enough for the moment. There is space, though, in which to anticipate and answer two very pointed queries. Do I not also dislike novels in which young men are plunged into manifestly ridiculous conspiracies, and there is talk without end of moonlight and moonshine? Again—the question is topical—do I not also dislike novels in which floods and landslides and lunatics are hurled at the reader, and the words "night" and "darkness" are repeated maddeningly? The answer is that I do dislike such things—now.



## MACKEREL AND THE MOON

BY ROSEMARY BLACKADDER

WE pile nets and oilskins and kettles into the boat, haul up the sails and set off from the Nordfjord to the outer islands. At Knappen there is a green oasis in the rock: potatoes, lime trees, a cow or two and a boy with black eyes and long black hair, gutting fish down by the boat-house.

"Hi! Lars! Where's your father?" "Over at Soevik, buying stores." He goes on slitting up the white throats and jerking out insides with a quick, shiny knife. Off we go to Soevik in search of Magnus, because no fishing trip is complete without him. He is a charming companion, admirable cook, famous teller of stories and the most expert fisher of these parts. (Except, of course, Steffen, but that does not count, for Steffen baits his line with black magic and when he pulls in his net the devil himself lends a hand to the rope.)

At last we put into the little bay where the Land-handline, the universal stores, stands; a small red house, built low of heavy timber, where you can buy anything in the world that your heart wishes, only it must be an island heart, limiting its desires to the range of sausages and tarpaulin, green cheese or blue indiarubber birds that you can blow up and hang in your window.

Nils goes up to fetch Magnus, but they are a long time in coming back, because Magnus, elbow on the counter and a glass in his hand, is in the middle of one of his best stories, and that and the contents of the glass must first come to their due and proper end. At last he comes striding down the path, very tall and beautiful in blueish garments that have suffered a sea-change as, for that matter, have all his features, his voice and way of moving his hands, rich and strange, savouring of oars and ropes and rain. On his shoulder is a tremendous white linen sack, full, he assures us, of bread—seventy pounds of bread does his family eat in a week, God help them, and mackerel as they are at barely a krone the kilo and the three youngest children, too small for work at the nets or the land, but the weather is likely to keep up and that is something for which to have a grateful heart, though we may have to take a reef in if the wind keeps on. All this he announces as he comes down the path, and greets us graciously, as Olav Trygerson might have acknowledged the presence of some of his subjects. He takes his place at the tiller and steers outward.

We put into a creek where the fishing is usually good and draw it without much success. Then we go round one of the larger islands to where there is a sudden green valley. A few crofters and fishermen have turned it into a small, lonely paradise of nut trees and sunflowers, minute perpendicular fields and a house or two, painted yellow and blue. Here we slacken the sails and lie waiting for the shoal. Magnus sits in the prow of the row-boat talking incessantly about nothing in the world. He is quite grave, however moved his audience may be, and while he talks, his eyes all the time are on the water, straining after mackerel. A ruffle on the surface, a light shimmer. The little fish are there, the big "stim" of mackerel will follow.

Suddenly a quiver of light like a knife in the sun shows where they come, hard on the tails of their prey. Nils coils up the net and rope ready in the boat. Magnus sits waiting at the oars, going on with his story. Then at last the shoal is in the creek. Out with the oars. Nils flings one end of the rope to someone ashore and lets the net out, lifting it up with both arms and heaving it over. They row across silently and quickly till it stretches right across the creek and then jump ashore. Standing on the flat rock they begin to heave on the rope in a steady

rhythm. So do we at our end, hauling it in with quick, regular jerks. It is wet with seaweed and tears at our fingers.

The net closes in. Someone runs down and gets hold of the inner ends and we all pull till it is gathered up like a bag, full of pale blue jelly and a mass of a sort of seaweed that looks like damp brown paper: crabs, sea-urchins, scarlet starfish caught in the meshes, and the struggling, gasping fish. These are for the most part "lyr," or whiting, a fine large sea-trout or two, a flounder, a small prickly fish with spikes the colour of pale poisons, and a large, flapping eel. There is shouting and stamping while we kill them. In the quiet valley children go on forking the hay. Their little horse crops at the stubble and the cut grass smells sweet and faint and mingles with the fish-smell. A boy piles the hay on the cart and a very little girl hands up the rope to bind it. They go off into the shadow of the trees. The shining silver bodies lie quite still now, patterned with green and blue and crimson, in a gleaming heap on the dark rock. Berent sorts out the net. Magnus spits and shoves his hat off his forehead and pours himself out a drink.

We light a fire, groping in the dusk for dried fir branches and twigs of juniper that will take the flame. On the rocks are large bits of drift wood and a mass of crackling, dried seaweed that burns well. When the fire flares up, suddenly the shore seems very dark, and the high outlines of the mountains and islands, black and navy blue, huddle together in strange shapes and masses like huge Huldre and Troll, towering over our spark of light. We gather round the warm spot and talk and drink red wine and crunch rugkavring, a delicious sort of hard tack, spread thick with sweet, brown goat-cheese. The waves make a heavy dragging sound against the stones and lick up against the side of the boat. Far ashore a dog barks and whines at the young moon and the children call out on their way to bed. Someone is playing a concertina, a monotonous, emphatic tune.

What Berent says amounts to this: Here we sit like bits of drift wood thrown up on the rock, and that is exactly what we are. Pulled here and there by currents and tossed and thrown about on the waves and then flung up on some distant shore where we never thought to come. Or we follow the shoal like the lyr, hurrying after some sort of shining prey and just when we are going to close our jaws on it: Hop! We are dragged off in the nets of a power larger than ourselves. It is all a matter of shoals and tides moving us and dragging us here and there.

He is silent and Venus shows suddenly pale and clear on the horizon.

"The Fanter," Magnus says, throwing back his head so that no drop shall remain in the glass, "have a way of life that is like enough to that of the birds and the fish, drifting about in their boats as they do and picking up what comes their way." The Fanter are sea-gipsies who live in boats, going from place to place, stealing fish from the nets and getting hold of whatever else they can. You meet the same type in the Hebrides and up the West Coast of Scotland. "They have odd sort of ways. Whey they get tired of trekking round the old people who are not fit for work, crack! with an oar on the head and over they go, sewed up in a mattress.

"I was out with the line one evening and drew in such a sack, a great heavy, shapeless weight. I felt three heads and the shoulders below them. Severine was with me in the boat and you know how women are in face of dead things out of the sea, shrieking and carrying on, so that I let it go. These people have queer notions. When they have a baby to christen they do not bring it to church, but walk seven times round a rock. Seven times round and seven times back I have seen them walk, and the children thrive on it. Kavring, thousand thanks."



Magnus appreciates his kaving, because he is living, he explains, solely on a diet of stewed cauliflower. He grows them with much trouble in a sort of hanging garden that he and his children have scratched out of the rock. On Saturday he went to market with eight cauliflowers and sold only two, so the family have to eat up the remaining six.

"What became of the pig, then?" asks Nils, from a cloud of smoke.

"That pig was tough. Her skin, when I had it off her, was as thick as the middle of a yew and no one could get a tooth through any bit of her. Only fit for soap."

"That was another of Steffen's works. He came by on the first day of September and looked at her in the way he does from over the wall. Exactly seven days after that she fell sick and died, and none of us wondered at it. He has dark ways with all beasts. When he goes out to fish he has a plain piece of wood with him, carved with all manner of strange signs and words. He looks on that and talks to it like to a child and looks up at the sky and anywhere except on the water where his eye should be. It tells him where to cast and fills his net with all the fish in the bay, so that if I meet him out with his bit of wood I turn round and come home." Steffen chews tobacco vindictively all day. He goes on chewing in bed at night and spits at the wall instead of (says Magnus) across his wife, so that the mural decoration in that house is a thing that the Holy Olav himself would wonder to see, "Only I think he would scarcely visit there.—Holla! Stim!" He jumps into the boat. In comes the shoal, breaking the dark water into a hundred small points and patches of light.

It is very late when we come home, but for all that over at Trollnes there is still a figure huddled up darkly on the high rock. We know who it is before we see in the white moonlight the fur hat, the bent back, piercing eyes, buried away among forests of wrinkles and eyebrows, the gnarled bony hands that always seem to be clutching and grasping something, drawing in invisible nets and lines and ropes.

He sits crouched quite still, staring not at us, nor the trail of fire and shadow we leave on the water, but far farther out, farther off. Is it for mackerel that he waits so intently, or will some stranger, darker shape, break through the clear surface of the sea? Ugh. I do not know. Good-night.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*The Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW welcomes the free expression in these columns of genuine opinion on matters of public interest, although he disclaims responsibility alike for the opinions themselves and the manner of their expression.*

### THE REFORM OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

SIR,—As your leading article points out, the necessity for the Reform of the House of Lords is due to the weakness of its present powers rather than to the method of its composition. Under the Parliament Act the House of Lords is the weakest second chamber in existence. It can exercise no restraint on the most reckless interference with private property by means of taxation and can only delay a measure for its own extinction for a period of two years. Any effective second chamber must have the right of refusing to pass measures of a revolutionary or fundamental character until they have received the approval of the electorate. This right of reference to the people is an essential safeguard for the operation of democracy.

As Sir Henry Maine pointed out, "what is required in a second chamber is not rival infallibility, but additional security. It is hardly too much to say that any second chamber is better than none." It is generally agreed that the size of the present House is far too large, but most of its critics will admit that it contains more men of outstanding ability and authority

than any other revising chamber in existence. The present House of Lords is not too exclusive, but too inclusive. It therefore seems desirable that any reformed second chamber should be mainly composed of members selected or elected from the existing House. Certain democratic enthusiasts are eager for a popularly elected Senate, but the creation of such a body would not only challenge the predominance of the House of Commons; it would involve a violent break in the traditional growth of the constitution and destroy the historic associations of eight centuries.

It is more satisfactory if any great constitutional change can be carried with the consent of all parties, but unfortunately there is not the slightest prospect of ever obtaining such general agreement. The Socialist Party, so far as it has any belief in Parliamentary government, is avowedly in favour of a single-chamber system. Indeed, it is too much to expect the organizers of the general strike to become the champions of Parliamentary reform.

The Liberal Party has never made any genuine effort for the solution of the problem which it itself created, and it is now impossible to gain its approval because it is inherently incapable of having a unanimous opinion on any subject.

I am, etc.,

GORDON C. TOUCHE

7 Richmond Mansions, S.W.5

### RELIGION AND SCIENCE

SIR,—Does not your correspondent, "A Parson," in your issue of October 15, realize that there are thousands of "ordinary laymen," earnest, thinking men and women, who regard his assertions as simply fantastical—who would deny emphatically almost all of his premises?

Science has no quarrel with Christianity? True—in one sense. Science ignores it. Both in practice and in theory, the supernatural is not taken into account. Also I should like to emphasize that no sphere of human thought is closed to science. All phenomena is observed; and did the supernatural intervene, then that would have to be accounted for. What is beyond objective reality neither Christian nor non-Christian knows. It is waste of time to speculate beyond natural phenomena.

But Christianity has a quarrel with science! Sixty-eight years ago the theological armaments were brought to bear upon that essay in biology, the 'Origin of Species,' and an intermittent warfare has been waged against it ever since. (Incidentally, there has not been an important scientific generalization that has not met with bitter obstruction from the Church. The Copernican theory, the theory of gravitation, the Nebular Hypothesis, the theory of uniformity in geology—all these have been opposed on the ground that they were against the teaching of the Christian Church.) I emphasize the opposition to Darwinism—it would not matter if Darwin were wrong, we should only look elsewhere for the machinery of evolution—however, because of its topical interest.

The Fundamentalists of Dayton provided a fine example of the Christian thought of to-day. Now, in the opinion of the Bishop of Durham, the Christians of Dayton were sixty years behind those of this country. According to this Bishop of the English Church, sixty years ago the Christians here believed in the literal truth of the Bible from cover to cover.

I should like to ask "A Parson" two questions. Why is it that the Christians of Dayton to-day and the Christians of England sixty years ago clung frantically to beliefs discredited by informed minds? And why were their would-be instructors, in their attempts to give them better knowledge, so fiercely resisted and rewarded with imprisonment, ostracism and slander?

I put it to "A Parson" that the answer many "ordinary laymen" give to these questions is: "The

influence of the Bible and of the Christian Churches."

I am, etc.,

W. THOMPSON

35 Victoria Road, Clapham Common, S.W.4

#### THE INDIAN MUTINY

SIR,—If admission to the "Sevenpennies" be a test of fame, two other books besides 'Eight Days' must be accounted famous; Captain Trotter's 'Nicholson' and Chesney's 'The Dilemma.' The latter, like 'Eight Days,' is a novel of great power. A great many very interesting books have been written about India, but all through the nineteenth century, as Thackeray notes in 'The Newcomes,' England was strangely blind to the mighty deeds of her sons in India. So that writers like Malleon, Yule or Sir Alfred Lyell were read mainly by that special public—at that time almost a caste—whose relatives served in the East. For myself, I got more help for the work of a parish priest from the lives of such men as Outram and the Lawrences, to me most fascinating, than from any clerical handbooks. It takes some courage, even under the shelter of a pseudonym, to own oneself unthrilled at Delhi or Lucknow, but the power of self-expression in words is not very widely given to our race. For all the earlier portion of my life I lived among people connected with India, many of whom had been through the Mutiny, but I never heard the whisper of a suggestion that we were *ashamed* of the Mutiny, as is suggested by your correspondent, "Anglo-Indian." The Bengal Army, indeed, had got out of hand. Their officers were devoted to them, but they were not devoted to their officers. Yet some of the mutineers had a conscience. My cousin, Captain (afterwards General) Cookworthy, who commanded one of the two troops of Horse Artillery in that same column in which the 52nd marched and which Nicholson commanded, used to tell us that before the Battle of Trimmoo Ghat two old Subahdars blew out their brains rather than fight the English.

In the Mutiny we fought because we must, and as Englishmen always do when their backs are to the wall, we fought well. And it is true that we called to our aid Sikhs, Punjabis and Pathans, always ready to march out under daring leaders like Nicholson, Hodson and Daly. Yet it is remarkable that the peasantry continued their work in the fields while our soldiery marched past them on the roads.

I am, etc.,

C. POYNTZ SANDERSON (Hon. C. F.)

Emsworth, Hants

#### THE LIFE-BOAT INSTITUTION

SIR,—I believe I am only one of a considerable number who are unable to work themselves into transports about the Royal National Life-Boat Institution. Some of us would like to know how exactly the bulk of the money subscribed by the public is applied. All I personally know about it is contained in the official notepaper of the Institution, which is adorned with an imposing list of officials' names and a lot of telephone numbers. It would be interesting to know how much money office and telephone rents and officials' salaries absorb. Does anyone know if regular balance sheets of the Institution are published?

I was brought up in a small coast town where there was a life-boat of the Institution, and I was intimately acquainted with many of the seafaring men who formed its crew. These gallant fellows, so far as I could gather, did not participate to any great extent in the funds provided by a generous public, even after being out in a tempest. Is it not the case that many of the life-boats and life-boat houses have been gifted by outsiders? Of course, the boats need their equipment kept up, and it is necessary to have periodical practices by the crews. But these cannot be very formidable items of expenditure.

There is another important point: Shipwrecks on our coasts are not so frequent as they used to be. The reasons for this are:

1. Modern ships are more powerful, are better manned and equipped, and have more and better life-boats and life-belts of their own.

2. The roads and channels are much better buoyed and lighted. There are more and better lighthouses and lightships with louder-sounding sirens, better apparatus and stronger lights.

3. Coastguardsmen are more numerous and better trained.

4. The coastguard stations are better equipped and have more scientific apparatus in the form of rockets and cradles for life-saving purposes.

5. There is a great increase in the number of tugs and swift navy motor vessels which, in several areas at any rate, have superseded the work of boats of the National Life-Boat Institution.

6. Facilities for communication by means of telegraph, telephone and wireless.

It would be well if there were some examining authority for all voluntary concerns like the R.N.L.I., which would furnish the public with exact information as to the application of the funds subscribed by them. In my humble judgment the necessity for such an institution must become less as time goes on.

I am, etc.,

J. LESLIE MACCALLUM

Oakleigh, Boswall Road, Leith

#### P's AND Q's

SIR,—I am far away from libraries, and am puzzled by two lines in Shakespeare:

My part of Death no one so true  
Did share it.

[Twelfth Night, Act ii, Scene iv, in the Clown's Song.]  
Do the lines mean "on the stage of life no one has played the part of Death so truly as I?" or "No lover so true as myself has ever lived and died"? or what? Will some reader kindly tell me? J. B.

SIR,—Can any of your readers complete for me—and also name the author of—the triolet beginning:

I wish I had a Borgia Ring  
To give to Uncle Frederick!  
A little catch, a little spring!  
I wish I had a Borgia Ring.  
Etc.

E. W.

#### "PAS MEME ACADEMICIEN"

SIR,—The author of the epigram was the scurrilous French eighteenth-century poet, Piron, and the whole runs:

Ci-git Piron  
Qui ne fut rien  
Pas même  
Académicien.

J. C. S.

[Answers to this query have also been received from: Oliver E. Bodington, A. Morland, E. Goodwill, S. V. S. and W.]

#### THE UPAS TREE

SIR,—Definite information is provided by 'The Treasury of Botany,' Part I, under "Antiaris." The Upas tree exudes a milky juice which is highly poisonous, but as specimens of it are now cultivated in botanic gardens, and do no harm, the legend that its shade kills is refuted. Foersch, a Dutch surgeon at the close of the eighteenth century, stated that he derived his information about its baleful power from some of those who had been lucky enough to escape, criminals condemned to die being offered the chance to go to the tree and collect some of the poison. The real reason for the loss of life was the habitat of the tree in a low valley with crevices in the ground which gave forth poisonous gases.

W. H. J.



## THE THEATRE

### BLOOD-BOLTERED BANQUETS

BY IVOR BROWN

*The Crooked Billet.* By Dion Titheradge. Royalty Theatre.  
*The Merchant of Venice.* By William Shakespeare. Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith.  
*Crime.* By Samuel Shipman and John B. Hymer. Queen's Theatre.

ATRUCE, you may say, to these eternal blows and bandages, these knives and guns and all the noisy traffic of the nefarious! But what is a poor critic to do? He must follow his theme and his theme follows fashion and fashion leads to Gibbet Hill. No fault of mine that I am in blood steeped in so far and that, week after week, I must incarnadine my page. The modern public cannot flock to Tyburn in its thousands to see a cut-purse "going very handsome to the gallows"; but it is fairly well provided with scenes of physical torture on the stage. Of course we moderns are more cowardly in our cult of cruelty; we know that it is all right really, and that the nice-looking boy in 'The Crooked Billet' is not going to have his gullet slit by the man who is drawing the blade across the flesh; we know that the defenceless lad who is being battered by the police-bullies in the "third degree" scene of 'Crime' is going to be free and smiling by eleven o'clock. Why, then, do we enjoy these spectacles? There is no mystery about the result; can there be pleasure in watching the mere process of pain? I suppose there is, though I do not share it. The young women who sit and say, "Ooh!" when the steel scrapes the bared throat and the policeman teaches the wretched prisoner with a right to the jaw that to blab is better than to sacrifice are the spiritual descendants of the myriads who made a public holiday of a public execution. No doubt our pleasures are the more humane, but are they the more honest? As I sat in yawning attendance upon the insufferable Portia's insufferable suitors I reflected that for first-afternooners 'The Merchant of Venice' may have been almost exciting. Tragedy was the vogue then, and, unless the play had been specially and conspicuously billed as comedy, many of the audience must have thought that the Jew would really get his butcher's meat and be promptly and properly butchered by Bassanio. There might have been a fifth act at Belmont as heavily badged with blood as the Andronicus affair, Morocco and Aragon returning to a hot contest at tossing the casket and hitting Portia with one of their more erratic deliveries. Jessica would die of a monkey-bite, Lorenzo swallow a few handy poisons, and Nerissa find a region willow and a watery end as aptly as Ophelia. At any rate for that first audience the spectacle of Shylock whetting his blade in court must have had some stirring potency. Now the ruffianism of Jew and Christian alike are mere routine, and we can only wonder what Miss Thorndike will do with Portia and Mr. Lewis Casson with Shylock. I preferred the plain-clothes Portia, which Miss Thorndike played at the Haymarket a year ago at a special matinée, to the heavily be-wigged and mannered lady who now makes Shakespeare's rather tiresome conceits caper in front of Mr. Garside's delightful curtains. Whenever Portia can be sincere, Miss Thorndike's power comes through, and she is excellent in the masculinity of the trial scene. Mr. Casson's Shylock is an admirable exchange both for the conventional monster gurgling in the grand manner and for the new "sympathetic" Shylocks, who have nothing to do with Shakespeare's

intention and much with modern affectation. Mr. Casson presents the ruffian Shylock, but also an actual ruffian, i.e., a mean, little, flat-toned shyster who might be an East-End fur-trader, very quick in argument and just the man whom the insurance companies do not like. If ever there was such a Jew of Venice I feel sure he was this little horror of Mr. Casson's presentation. But he might, I think, have washed his face and looked less of a rag-bag. But even Mr. Casson's brilliant actuality, which is a pleasant relief after the gargantuan clawings and wheezings and whoopings and snarlings and amalgamated lung-troubles of the tradition, cannot convince me that 'The Merchant' is a play for adults.

But I stray from the sap and blood with which a critic must nowadays lace his argument. 'The Crooked Billet' has been firmly driven into the soil of success. It is none of those teasing trifles in which the seeming innocent is inevitably the greatest gunman of them all. It is true that 'The Doctor' looks like the beneficent patent-holder of a vinous tonic with just a touch of the American senator, but we know him promptly for what he is; slit gullets and punctured arteries are three-a-penny in his bill of criminal costs, and the excitement is not of mystery but of conflict. Will he outwit Sir William and the laconic, limber Mr. Merrow? No, of course he won't. But he holds most of the weapons, and it is great fun watching them miscarry and misfire. The author, in order to keep the campaign alive for three acts, has to credit each side with one stupendous blunder. But, with this allowance, he makes a very good show of check and counter-check. Mr. Leon Quartermaine and Mr. C. V. France are captains, clever as well as courageous, in this tourney of guns, knives, bombs, dope, and hands that clutch in the dark. Infamy goes at the gallop until it tumbles gallantly at the post.

'Crime' is an all-American adventure; a species of sequel to 'Broadway,' but not as slick. When I reviewed 'Broadway' I discussed the medievalism of New York and was called to order by one of our modern medievalists. I cannot help reverting to the comparison between the old habits of the Old World and the new habits of the New. In 'Crime' we see the art of inquisition being practised by the New York police, and observe that a modern State can cheerfully employ the technique of the ancient Church. It seemed to me a sufficiently sickening spectacle, but there are others less queasy who would think poorly of Medea if she did not give her children a public dispatch. For those who can relish blood-boltered banquets 'Crime,' even more than 'The Crooked Billet,' is a generous caterer.

But the piece starts slowly. It plays for our sentiments in a manner that 'Broadway' did not. We are to sigh for the boy and girl who are ensnared in villainy and, finally, to sigh still more deeply for the master-crook who turns out to be "a regular fellow," and goes to the chair with as noble a gesture as accompanied Carton to the guillotine. On the other hand 'Crime' has one excellent scene showing the tactics of a raid on a jeweller's shop, and the producer, Mr. Van Buren, has brought to this the brilliant control of bustle and mass-effects which is typical of American stage-craft. Mr. Louis Kimball is an adroit leader of a team remarkable both for its gunmanship and gusto. And now let the critic endeavour to wash his hands with more success than Lady Macbeth; may next week be even milky with kindness so that he may untrifled exclaim:

Your gentleness shall force  
 More than your force move us to gentleness.  
 Cease fire! Time, ungentlemen, please!



## MUSIC

## CORRUPTIO OPTIMI

THE Léner Quartet is with us once more. After a preliminary canter in the Albert Hall and a few chatty interviews about their private concerns in the evening papers, they settled down on Tuesday to the first of their series of six concerts which are to give us "an historical survey of the Great Masters of Chamber Music." They began with Mozart, choosing the great C major quartet, the clarinet quintet and the quartet in D minor from the set dedicated to Haydn. Let me mention here, since the programme ungallantly omitted all reference to him, that the clarinet-part in the quintet was excellently played by Mr. Charles Draper. That programme, by the way, was extraordinary even in the odd world of concert-programmes. Sold for a shilling, it contained in its short introduction four errors of fact, and it did not compensate for these by providing any really helpful appreciation of the music for those who need it.

Of the clarinet quintet, a work which approaches as near to perfection as any that has been written, the programme was content to remark that "it has been criticized on the ground that the clarinet is treated too much as a solo instrument." It is possible that someone has uttered so stupid a criticism, but it is difficult to see why anyone should wish to drag it out of decent obscurity and oblivion. There are so many other things which might usefully have been said about the quintet. For one thing, it shows Mozart's unparalleled ability to make the best use of any material that came to his hand and to find instinctively the right treatment for any given combination. The clarinet was a comparatively recent invention in 1789. Yet Mozart soon mastered its possibilities, with the assistance of Anton Stadler, a despicable man but a fine player, to such an extent that he left very little for anyone else to discover about the instrument.

It is remarkable that Brahms, who wrote his quintet under the similar impulse of friendship with a great executant, follows closely the technique of the Stadler quintet, different though the content of his work is. Mozart's quintet is, compared with the string quintets (of which the G minor is to be played next Tuesday), light and graceful. Its style is conditioned by the character of the fifth instrument. For while it blends well with the strings, the clarinet is bound to stand out from them, and has to be used as a contrasting voice rather than as one of a group in which each member has equal rights. The wide sweep of its compass, its aptitude for elaborate figures and the rhapsodical character which these give to the music, are fully exploited by Mozart. The instrument enters with a broad *arpeggio*, which at once asserts its individuality, and throughout the work it treats the material in its own characteristic way, avoiding any slavish imitation of the strings. The result is a work of peculiar charm. Indeed, it would be difficult to find a better example of Mozart's euphony, of his unflinching flair for getting the best out of his instruments, and his ability to touch lightly upon the deepest chords of emotion.

There is tender sentiment in the first movement, which deepens a little in the second, where the instruments *sing* for our enchantment as they rarely do even in Mozart's music. In the minuet, with its remarkable Trios, we are on the borderline of the *scherso* in Beethoven's sense. But it is in the final movement that the composer's genius shines brightest. Taking a simple melody of the nursery-rhyme type, he develops from it a series of variations, in which we catch glimpses of all manner of hidden mysteries and deep meanings. Yet the essentially naive quality

of the tune is never lost to sight. Mozart does not twist the theme out of knowledge, or develop it in the grand manner until the final transfiguration—like a nobleman descended from lowly ancestors—does not recognize its origin in the humble little theme. Yet he is not content merely to embellish the melody with graceful ornaments, which was all that he did in his youthful variations for pianoforte, but has pressed from it its last drop of significance. All the feeling which this tune evoked in the soul of Mozart is here set forth for us, and no better answer could be given to the question, "What do you mean by Mozartian?" than the performance before the inquirer of the variations from the clarinet quintet.

Not long ago I should have said: "The performance by the Léner Quartet." But Tuesday's experience has made me change my mind. For there was nothing very Mozartian in their performances that night. It was a minor thing that they omitted all the repeats in the variations of the quintet, and so prevented their full beauty being deployed. For in a movement of that nature the short sections require the repeats in order to have sufficient elbow-room. Worse than that, the playing of the Quartet has lost all back-bone, and has become the equivalent in music of what the dramatic critics call "refinement" on the stage. What is the use of all the balance and polish and elegance in the world when the robust Minuet of the C major quartet is turned into the music of a mincing nincompoop, when the rhythm of the slow movement is emasculated in the effort to achieve a record in *legato*-playing, and when, for fear of scratching the french-polish of their tone, the performers dare not give us a good honest *forte*? This was a very corruption of the best.

H.

## LITERARY COMPETITIONS—86

SET BY GERALD BARRY

A. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for a Ballade of Saint Christopher (the Patron Saint of Travellers), having for refrain the line, "Ne pas se pencher au dehors." The Ballade to be in English.

B. In a recent issue our contributor A. A. B. suggested that had Lord Birkenhead not accepted the Lord Chancellorship in 1919, nothing and nobody could have prevented his succession to the leadership of the Conservative Party at the dissolution of the Coalition. We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for an extract of 450-500 words from a fictitious Short History of Our Times, based on the supposition that Sir Frederick Smith became Prime Minister in 1922. The extract may cover the whole or a fragment of the period since that date. Competitors are reminded that historians are expected to be impartial.

## RULES

i. All envelopes must be marked LITERARY, followed by the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and addressed to the Editor, The SATURDAY REVIEW, 9 King Street, London, W.C.2 (e.g., this week, LITERARY 86a, or LITERARY 86a).

ii. Typescript is not essential, provided the writing is legible, but competitors must use one side of the paper only. Pen-names may be employed if desired.

iii. Where a word limit is set, every fifty words must be marked off by competitors on their MSS.

iv. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves to himself the right to print in part or in whole any matter sent in for competition, whether successful or not. MSS. cannot be returned. Competitors failing to comply with any of these rules will be disqualified. Should the entries submitted be adjudged undeserving of award the Editor reserves the right to withhold a prize or prizes.

Entries must reach the Editor, addressed according to the rules, not later than by the first post on Monday, October 31, 1927. The results will be announced in the issue of the SATURDAY REVIEW immediately following. Neither the Editor nor the setter of the Competitions can enter into any correspondence with competitors.

## RESULTS OF COMPETITIONS 84

SET BY J. B. PRIESTLEY

A. *The Rhinoceros, that solitary and brooding beast, is an animal that seems to have been generally neglected by the poets. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the two best poems on the subject of the lonely Rhinoceros. The poems may be mystical, philosophical, pictorial, sentimental, whimsical, comic, but they must not be more than sixteen lines in length. Merely facetious verses will not be welcomed.*

B. *It has been said that the naming of the lowest court card marks a subtle division between two classes in this country, the people who call it a Knave being on a higher social level than those who call it a Jack. We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the two best lists of half a dozen distinctions of this kind. They must be fairly subtle (thus, wearing collars and not wearing collars will not do), and it is not necessary that the competitor himself or herself should think these distinctions of the slightest importance.*

## REPORT FROM MR. PRIESTLEY.

84A. I never imagined that the Rhinoceros would have so many friends. Some of the competitors, however, seemed to think his lonely majesty could be best celebrated in jingling and lively lyrics that seemed to have come from some musical comedy of the 1900 period ('The Girl and the Rhino'). Thus one began:

Lonely I live in the rivery swamp  
And it's demnition hot and it's demnition damp

and another:

I will venture a line, O, in praise of the rhino,  
By our poets so sadly forgotten.  
Still, rhinoceros breeders and critical readers  
May denounce this effusion as "rotten."

I suspect that he is right, though I cannot speak on behalf of rhinoceros breeders. Other verses again seemed to have come from some lost Jungle libretto of Gilbert's:

O Rhino how sad, O beast how ill-boded,  
I think it's too bad that you still are un-oded

or this:

The Rhinoceros, like most ungulate mammals,  
Must journey through life in invidious trammels;  
And that sort of handicap rankles.

We can almost hear Mr. Lytton singing these lines. Other and more successful competitors gave picturesque and dramatic accounts of the rhinoceros at home, and of these Major Brawn, Issachar, and Lester Ralph deserve honourable mention. Eva Tytler's attempt to confront the beast with Berkeley's metaphysical idealism was clever, and, had the lines been more neatly turned, would have gained a prize. B. B. and P. H. Jackson are highly commended, and so is Lucy Duncan. The poem by Midory that I recommend for the First Prize, and that by George van Raalte for the Second Prize, are not free from clumsy turns of phrase and weak lines, but they come nearest, in content and form, to what I had in mind when I suggested the subject.

## FIRST PRIZE

Before Creation knew its name;  
Before our fathers joined the strife  
To fight, as beasts, with beasts for life,  
Were you; and you are still the same;  
Still armed against the teeth and wings  
Of strange, long gone, primeval things.

Haunted and dim your feeding ground:  
The gnarled roots like writen bones  
Thrust upwards from the mossy stones;  
The river runs with curdling sound.  
Alone you brood, knee-deep in slime;  
Forgotten in the drift of time.

MIDORY

## SECOND PRIZE

Vast, solitary, ugly, shunned  
By beast and fowl, the Horny-Nose  
In monstrous disproportion stands:  
And yet the Life by which he grows  
Has moulded too the butterfly,  
And painted too the sunset-glows.

The groaning Earth beneath his weight  
Is glad, and feels her travailings  
Once more with that portentous brood.  
And, in the startled glance he flings,  
From his pig-eyes, moist, bleared, and dim,  
Looks out the secret soul of things.

GEORGE VAN RAALTE

84B. One competitor made a social distinction between the people who say "I'm satisfied" and those who say "I've had enough." Well, I will belong to both classes and announce that, so far as this competition is concerned, I am not satisfied but I have certainly had enough. Another competitor adds a postscript: "What a snobbish competition this is!" And he is right. It is, or was. This room is snowed under with sneers at people who say "Serviette" and "Pleased to meet you," and "Lady friend," and "Costume," and "That's right" (a favourite, this: Mr. Padge's ears must be burning), and at people who pour the milk in first, who wet their thumbs, who shout "Miss" in teashops, who put knitted cosies on eggs, who eat chocolates at the theatre, who do not own a dressing-gown, and who put the names of their houses in inverted commas, and so on and so forth. The number of entries has been colossal, and some readers have each presented me with about thirty distinctions. I seem to have turned many an honest gathering of friends into an orgy of petty snobbery. The joke is that not a few names, abbreviations, greetings, turns of phrase, have been sent in as being characteristic of both classes, or—as all the competitors call them—both the "Knave Class" and the "Jack Class." The commonest fault was that the distinctions were too wide, quite as bad as the collar and no collar one. The next fault most in evidence was that of giving distinctions without a social difference. And, of course, a great many competitors never tried to provide me with what I asked for, but simply denounced all manner of bad habits and solecisms. I realize now that I set both competitors and judges a hopeless task. Nevertheless, if there had been one list that contained six passable distinctions, I would have recommended it for a prize; but, as it is, all have at least two absurdities in them, and so I can only recommend that no prize be awarded. I would apologize, only I feel that we have all had some fun. And I at least have learned something. You won't catch me knitting an egg cosy in future.

## BACK NUMBERS—XLVI

IT may be nearly twenty years since, in answer to an inquiry who was the greatest French poet, a distinguished man of letters said, "Victor Hugo, alas!" Whatever the lapse of time, critical opinion has not altered: we praise, and we sigh. When Victor Hugo died, in 1885, the SATURDAY REVIEW saluted him as the one great French writer who had survived to that date, and yet was candid in a summary of his limitations. The article, there is reason to believe, was from the pen of an eminent still living scholar, but neither he nor any other man has ever done exact justice to Hugo.

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If my memory serves me, there is only Sainte-Beuve's authority for the allegation that Baudelaire described Hugo as "an ass with genius," but, whether Baudelaire said it or not, the phrase has a good deal of justification. One may adore the genius; one may curse the ass: it is difficult to attain to the mood in which one can equally appreciate both the genius and the absurdity of Hugo. Baudelaire, certainly, was disgusted by the humanitarianism of Hugo. When the master sent him a volume of poems with a Latin inscription, bidding him join hands, Baudelaire wrote to a woman friend, "I know what underlies the Latin of Hugo—'let us join hands, to save the human race'; but I snap my fingers at the human race." One may be fonder of one's species than Baudelaire and yet feel unhappy about Hugo's persistent and declamatory concern for it.

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But is there any part of Hugo's work about which one can be quite happy? It is not that he is unequal: no poet is so unequal as Wordsworth, yet the lover of Wordsworth is content. The trouble with Hugo is that, in many respects, his worst work is very like his best, and arouses in one a horrible suspicion that the best may have won admiration by a kind of magnificent trickery.

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There are exceptions indeed. There are at least a dozen poems about which no reader capable of recognizing great poetry ever felt the smallest doubt. The song of songs, that of the lover maddened by the wind blowing over the mountains; the exquisite serenade; the poem of the dark hunter; these, and several other poems not in every anthology, allow of no doubt. They are such poetry as only the supreme masters can produce. But how much there is in any volume of Hugo's many to set one doubting. The world has had the sweepings of his study, and they are abominably like his finer work. It was well and wittily said of Watts that many of his pictures were too like National Gallery pictures to be hung there, and of a great deal of Hugo's verse it may be said that it is too like great poetry to be great.

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His technical resources were amazing; his vocabulary prodigious; his treasury of simile and metaphor inexhaustible. Again and again as a poet he cheated himself and us, writing something which has every excellence except inevitability. And yet, does not Hugo make every French poet of his age look rather thin? For myself, I cannot live with Hugo's poetry,

and I can never tire of Baudelaire's, but after reading Hugo it seems that Baudelaire is stinting us. Baudelaire, Gautier, all the others seem to be limited specialists when the range and amplitude of Hugo come to mind.

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The technical achievement of Hugo is something about which an Englishman, so remote from ours is the genius of French verse, must write with caution, and had, perhaps, better not write at all; but one thing is manifest in those portions of Hugo's verse which can be most closely compared with work in the central French tradition. When Hugo is using the couplet, it is clear that he is seeking, and triumphantly securing, his effects not in separate couplets but in verse-paragraphs, the glory of separate couplets being but that of single waves in the rush of great waters. Yet, to an English ear, at any rate, it is in the lyrical measures that Hugo is most marvellous. Leave out of account the masterpieces, look only at the metrical exercises, and there is evidence of a command of the instrument to which no other has attained. And perhaps it is in pursuance of this that we may come to the final thing about Hugo as a poet. One of his volumes is entitled, as no other volume of the world's poetry dare be. The whole lyre: Hugo alone, for all that is empty and preposterous in him, used the whole instrument.

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Of the romances, of which my predecessor in 1885 wrote with reserve, I am ill qualified to write. Several remain in the mind as things that greatly excited an immature reader, but I have not looked into any for years, and am unlikely to do so. Not one is solidly enough planned and carefully enough executed to be thoroughly satisfying, all have extravagances, passages written for effect, scenes in which charlatanism and not genius is operative. And there is always, in the memory of one reader, a recollection of 'The Man Who Laughed,' and was the cause of a laughter unintended by Hugo. If ever a great writer gave himself away with both hands, it was Hugo in that absurd book. Yet it was that book which inspired one of the most magnificent eulogies produced by Hugo's most illustrious English admirer.

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And so we must end, the most mutinous of us, on our knees before a writer with every fault except faults in technique. Victor Hugo did intolerable things, and for myself I have a lively hatred of listening in to Patmos in order to hear, in whatever magnificence of phrase, inflated or inverted platitudes; he was "an ass with genius," or what you will; but he was also the writer of certain poems and passages which make the achievements of his fellows look paltry. I would readily give up all his work for the one volume of Baudelaire's infinitely significant volume of verse, a volume with more æsthetic heroism in it than all Hugo's tomes can yield; but Banville was right in his hymn to Hugo in exile, "The father's yonder in the isle": the creature dominates everybody. You may say what you like of him, but you are forced to say something in homage eventually. Destructive criticism has done its utmost, and foolish eulogy has done almost more to injure him; but he abides, a colossal figure, with feet of clay, but with weighty laurels on his brow, and with a voice of gold.

STET.



## REVIEWS HISTORIES

BY EDWARD SHANKS

*Ancient Civilizations.* By Donald A. Mackenzie. Blackie. 12s. 6d.

*Hellenistic Civilization.* By W. W. Tarn. Arnold. 16s.

SOMEONE has recently remarked that we to-day know more of what was going on all over the world at any given time than did any person living at that time. Spengler holds that the sense of history is one of the distinguishing marks of Western civilization: he points out how soon in the ancient world an event was forgotten or faded into the mists of mythology. But how little history we know, how inaccurately we know it, how recent is most of our knowledge! Barely a century has gone since we began to realize that there were not one or two but many important civilizations in the East while the Greeks were still savages. The empire of the Hittites has begun to take shape in our knowledge only during the last twenty years or so and we still know very little about it. The civilization of Crete, till then almost unsuspected was dug up within the memory of men still young by Sir Arthur Evans and his assistants, no less liberators than M. Venizelos and his assistants whom they followed.

With the memory of these discoveries ever present to him and reminding him that there may be more to come as startling, of which now he does not dream, the historian ought to be, and generally is, as chary of confident assertion as the physical scientist. While a bishop stands in a cathedral pulpit and assures a congregation, not accustomed to expect hypothetics from such a place, that our knowledge of the radioactive elements enables us to calculate the age of the earth, the historian cannot even say how old civilization is nor where it originated. Egypt was the earliest guess, based rather on æsthetic and emotional grounds than on any reasoning: the monuments of Egypt have so peculiar an air of immemorial antiquity. But as the spade in Mesopotamia began to thrust further and further back into the past the beginnings of Babylon and Nineveh and to discover cities even older than they, this view seemed more and more of doubtful validity. Now we are swinging back to it again for more rational considerations.

The most valuable part of Mr. Mackenzie's otherwise somewhat bewildering book is his first chapter, in which he sets forth the simplest and most important of the facts underlying the theory sometimes bearing the name of the 'Children of the Sun.' The central contention, and the easiest to follow, is that only in the Nile valley, among all the river-valleys of the world, were the wild grasses which are capable of development into grain-bearing plants thus developed by nature. The Nile floods are followed by a cool season conducive to growth:

The Nile is the only great river in the world which rises in flood towards the close of the hot season and promotes the growth of vegetation during the period of comparative coolness. Wild barley grasses growing on its banks flourished after the soil had been drenched during inundation; and after the river shrank within its banks and the barley ripened, the seeds fell into the dry soil in that almost rainless country and remained in a state of perfect preservation until the river rose again in flood, bringing down new soil impregnated with fertilizers, and causing the seeds to sprout and the plants to flourish. The Nile thus of itself cultivated barley and made the seeds grow sufficiently plump to attract the attention of man. Elsewhere the wild barley remains in its original state, and of no value as a human food, until developed by man just as it was for many long centuries developed by the Nile in the land of Egypt.

The theory rests on the highly probable assumption

that man would not think of agriculture, of the intensive development of food-plants, until nature thrust the suggestion under his nose. It is supported by this, among other curious observations, that the wild wheat of Mesopotamia will not cross with the cultivated varieties, which therefore cannot be descended from it, while the wild wheat of Carmel has a Mendelian dominant which makes it useless for breeding purposes. Mr. Mackenzie obviously has an enthusiasm for the Egyptian origin of civilization and gives a very useful exposition of it: most of the remainder of his book, with its dry enumeration of the conquests of Alexander and so forth, has a purpose, if any, which is hidden from me.

From these darkly surmised foundations of the civilized world we come to a period which ought to be in the full blaze of history, but which most emphatically is not. There is nothing odder than the gaps in our knowledge of the state-system which grew up on the soil ploughed by Alexander. For a period of at any rate nearly two centuries, though Rome was growing and beginning to make itself felt, this system contained the focus of Western civilization, conserving and in some respects advancing the achievements of the Greeks. But there is so much about it that we do not know that it often seems the most barren chapter in all our histories and, by a natural tendency of the human mind, seems to have occupied a much shorter time than it actually did. There were active and brilliant men (and women) during that period, but, for lack of personal detail, they hardly seem real to us. There is even one of the Seleucid kings whose name we do not know—as though we were aware that there was an English king between George IV and Victoria, but had no record of what he was called. It was a time of political developments and experiments not incomparable with those of the nineteenth century—with, say, the constitution of the German Empire, with the Hague Tribunal, and with the League of Nations. For reasons that are difficult to estimate (they do not depend wholly on lack of information) these now interest us much less than the growth of the Athenian constitution under Cleisthenes and Pericles, though we may be sure that they seemed vastly more important to the citizens of Alexandria and Antioch in the second century B.C. There is here a comment worth noticing on the political history of Europe since the French Revolution.

Mr. W. W. Tarn, who was the author of the brilliant *Alexander* chapters in the latest volume of the 'Cambridge Ancient History,' has here done his best to fill in a serious gap and his book will be in future indispensable to the general reader who wishes to acquire a comprehension of the ancient world. But even he can do little with the political side of the period: these dry bones, apparently, will not come to life. But he shows that the age at large was anything but dry or dead. His chapters on trade, literature and learning, science and art, philosophy and religion, are as fascinating as he has given us a right to expect that he would make them.

## BISMARCK

*Bismarck: The Story of a Fighter.* By Emil Ludwig. Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. Allen and Unwin. 21s.

WHEN translations of a foreign historian's work appear at the rate of three volumes in a single month, there is clearly no need to emphasize his popularity. When the writer is Herr Ludwig, there is equally little need to proclaim his quality. The publication of his full study of Bismarck, in a translation worthy of the original, points to a repetition of the success of his earlier books. This can safely be predicted. The familiar brilliance and the familiar method

are exemplified again in his latest essay in the new art which we are asked to call "psychography." Bismarck's inner history is told with fascinating insight. The colouring is as brilliant and the mastery of dramatic presentation is as sure as formerly. Only the apparent ease of the triumph stirs a slight suspicion—which was not wholly absent in reading his 'Napoleon.' Here, it must be confessed, in one or two places, one is conscious of slight touches which to a critical historian seem perhaps questionable, if not certainly misleading. These occasions, however, are few. As a full-length portrait of Bismarck this book may certainly challenge comparison with any other.

Bismarck's life is unfolded as a drama in five acts. The basic elements in the character of the protagonist are pride, courage, hate. These appear in varying measure in the different stages of the action which Herr Ludwig entitles respectively, 'The Wanderer,' 'The Striver,' 'The Builder,' 'The Ruler,' 'The Outcast.' Perhaps from its relative unfamiliarity the part allotted to the first phase seems in some respects the best. Herr Ludwig offers a refreshing contrast to the biographer whose hero has the ball at his feet on page twenty-three. We have more than a hundred pages on Bismarck's early life and it is hardly an exaggeration to call these invaluable. They help us to realize both the truth and the falsehood—especially the falsehood—of the popular conception of the man of "blood and iron." Instead we are asked to view the evolution of an enigmatic genius, cynical but sentimental, neurotic, superstitious, perhaps dishonest, but at the same time immensely energetic and ruthlessly realist.

We detect a slight partiality rarely but unmistakably in these pages. Can we accept Bismarck as "the necessary exemplar of a brave civilian"? We think Herr Ludwig's book itself supplies the answer. It contains material for a severer but juster view of the man whose errors he certainly does not conceal. Only occasionally do we get a glimpse of what to some will seem the pertinent reflection provoked by his career. Bismarck himself was not wholly unaware of it. In his old age he wondered whether he had not helped to cause "the deplorable lack of backbone in Germany." He might have gone on to reflect that he had opposed German unification in 1848 and 1849 but of dislike of Liberalism and, as Herr Ludwig points out, preferred battlefields to barricades. It might almost be said he preferred unification by bloodshed to unification under a Liberal constitution.

On one other point a criticism may be made. Herr Ludwig's judgment on the episode of the Ems telegram is: "It has merely been edited." He is not the first writer to take such a view. But the term "edit" is a euphemism.

However achieved, German unity has remained. It is the thought uppermost in Herr Ludwig's mind as he concludes this book:

Germany lives: The German princes forsook her in her bitter need; but the German people, whose sterling qualities Bismarck recognized too late, was steadfast, and saved Bismarck's work from destruction.

It is, no doubt, the identification of the idea of enduring German unity with Bismarck that explains Herr Ludwig's slight, perhaps hardly perceptible, divergence from severe impartiality. It is with reluctance that one ventures even this criticism of so fine a piece of work.

¶ Readers who experience difficulty or delay in obtaining copies of the SATURDAY REVIEW are asked to communicate with the Publisher, 9 King Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2, who is always glad to give his personal attention to the matter.

## THE OLD REGIME

*Princesses, Ladies and Salonnières of the Reign of Louis XV.* By Thérèse Louis Latour. Translated from the French by Ivy E. Clegg. Kegan Paul. 15s.

*Letters and Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne, with Selections from his Other Works.* Translated by Leigh Ashton. Routledge (Broadway Library of Eighteenth-century French Literature). 10s. 6d.

*The Private Life of the Marshal Duke of Richelieu.* Translated by F. S. Flint. Routledge (Broadway Library of Eighteenth-century French Literature). 10s. 6d.

THOSE who believe that history is made by women will find these three well-produced volumes much to their liking. Their preference may go to Madame Latour's excellent sketches, which admirably illustrate the influence of the women of the court in the reign of Louis XV. There are short studies of some twenty of these and the characters are deftly and neatly drawn. That of Marie Leczinska, Louis XV's queen, with which the book opens, is a very good example of the writer's skill and method. With admirable economy she delineates a memorable portrait of a pious and stupid woman. She also brings out very well her transition from the poverty of refugee royalty to the unhappy splendour of Queen of France. Marie Leczinska owed her doubtful fortune to the expulsion of her family from Poland, her royal descent and her powerlessness and poverty which made her an ideal wife for Louis XV in the eyes of the ruling mistress. Madame de Prie controlled the chief minister of France, her one-eyed lover the Duc de Bourbon, and she looked for the continuance of power through her influence with the ever-grateful Marie. She reckoned without the craft of Cardinal Fleury, and the only result of her careful scheming was the permanent estrangement of Louis from his wife which followed Marie's pathetic intervention in politics.

The most interesting figure in Madame Latour's book is the woman whom a contemporary truly called the Prime Minister of France, the Marquise de Pompadour. Her designing mother educated her for the post of royal mistress from the age of a few months. Everything was done to make her attractive, both physically and mentally. Music, singing, dancing, elocution, drawing, painting, engraving were taught her by the best masters. The passion to please was also inculcated. Every day, we read, she became prettier, more graceful, and more captivating. Mother and daughter schemed together. A match with an ugly financier with chronically damp hands was undertaken with the object of furthering the joint ambition. Persistence had its reward, and by 1745 Madame de Pompadour was the recognized favourite of the king.

She was, perhaps, the most remarkable woman who ever occupied the position. She was beautiful, cold, devouringly ambitious. Here is a description of the new mistress at the outset of her career:

Her beautiful complexion, which was at once brilliant and delicate, she owed to the incredible whiteness of her skin and the exquisitely delicate colour in her cheeks. Her lips were rather pale, but the teeth which they hid were so ravishing and could flash so delightfully that no one thought of wishing that her lips had been redder. Madame de Pompadour's smile lit up and embellished her whole face, pretty as it already was, for it made the most adorable and disconcerting little dimples in her tiny cheeks. Her eyes, which were absolutely irresistible, are indescribable; sometimes they would seem to be black and sometimes blue. The only thing about which one could be certain was that they possessed all the qualities of both blue and black eyes and that they bewitched those upon whom their glances fell. She had magnificent, light auburn hair, which had borrowed the warmth and radiance of the setting sun. Her face was extraordinarily mobile, full of roguish charm and sometimes of nobility. She could be imperious, too. Her height, a little above medium, was exactly suited to this graceful, lissom, fascinating woman, in whom everything was justly proportioned, harmonious, and



even poetical. Her hands, arms and feet were perfect and her whole body, sprightly and enchanting, seemed to be controlled by the love which animated it.

Actually Madame de Pompadour was without passion, save ambition. She failed to simulate love for Louis, and finally renounced the office of mistress, content to remain all-powerful favourite, controlling the Government of France in foreign as well as in domestic affairs. Her period of power, which lasted nearly twenty years, made its mark on the history of Europe as well as on the history of France. At home her policy was remarkable only for the promotion (with the solitary exception of Choiseul) of mediocrities. Abroad she was associated with the transformation scene which goes by the name of the "reversal of alliances," the water-shed of eighteenth-century diplomacy. The price she paid for continued power was complete devotion to the amusements and pleasures of the king. To prevent new mistresses gaining ascendancy over his mind she constituted herself his *procureuse*, and organized the *Folie*, known as the *Parc aux Cerfs*, where uneducated girls were trained to minister to Louis's amorous desires. She died in 1764 at the age of forty-three, after a virtual premiership of nineteen years. To her France owed the Austrian alliance, Sèvres statuettes, the cult of the pretty, and an expenditure computed at sixty million francs.

Among Madame Latour's other subjects are Marie Antoinette, whose levity, ignorance and folly are well displayed, Louis XV's daughters, stingy and jealous old maids, whom he called Scrap, Rag and Dud, Mademoiselle de Charolais, Madame d'Epinay, Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, and a number of others. Altogether the judgment is justified that the "Court of Versailles was at this period the most vicious and the most childish in Europe." As Plache has said: "At Versailles the Court yawns as it devours, without the least pleasure or enjoyment, twenty-five million men."

The same truth receives further illustration, in differing measure, in the two latest editions to the admirable 'Broadway Library' of eighteenth-century French literature which already includes translations of 'Candide' and 'Le Sofa.' One turns from Marie Antoinette and her donkey-races, masked-balls, her dolt of a husband and her alleged Lesbianism to the intrigues of de Ligne and the private life of the Marshal Duke of Richelieu. De Ligne was "a nice child," according to Madame du Deffand. He borrowed Louis XV's mistress, took an interest in gardening and had a reputation as a wit. When he was dying at Vienna in 1815 he wrote: "The congress of Vienna has come to the end of its entertainments; what shall I show them to amuse them? The funeral of a field-marshal." He was extravagant and shrewd. His wedding-suit, we read, cost £1,600. Of Joseph II he writes: "His education had been, like that of most sovereigns, neglected in favour of a course of polishing; a system by which everything was learnt except knowledge." He was more energetic than Louis XV. He began his day at three-thirty rather than at five.

The Marshal Duke of Richelieu, however, leaves all the rest behind. It may, indeed, be doubted whether the fragment now translated is genuine, but that the facts of his life are substantially similar to those here revealed is not open to question. He is sometimes supposed to be the original of Valmont in the 'Liaisons Dangereuses.' But, as Mr. Richard Aldington justly observes, he has no need to borrow anyone else's infamy. He was the most notorious rake of his age and the 'Private Life' is a record of the exploits of a heartless, calculating and consummate seducer. He has the distinction that he was not content with one affair at once. In the principal episode of the book, the story of Madame Michelin, the upholsterer's wife, he is shown engaged in a two-fold

seduction. Later in life he notes with pleasure his simultaneous conduct of six intrigues, "that gave me plenty of employment." They were, he writes: "as nearly as possible the finest women at court." His last child, the fruit of his third marriage, was born when he was eighty-four. His life of dissipation had extended well over half a century. He began as the pretty pet of the Court at the age of fourteen and survived to the very eve of the Revolution he had helped to bring about, the pallid red-nosed remnant of another age.

## SACRAMENTS

*The Christian Sacraments.* By Oliver C. Quick, Canon of Carlisle. Nisbet. 10s. 6d.

THIS is a book of outstanding merit. Canon Quick's reputation has been rising steadily, and this latest volume will certainly establish it, and win for the author an acknowledged place as one of the best minds in the Church of England. The tasks of theological restatement really run back to one common problem—the presentation of the Christian Gospel in terms of the ruling philosophy of values. The opening chapters of this book are one of the richest contributions yet made towards a right solution. The analysis of value and Theism is a piece of exceedingly acute thinking; and, more than that, of richly religious insight. There is one memorable passage which it is impossible not to quote:

Though nature and art and philosophy have taught us what beauty is, they cry with one voice "It is not in us," as soon as we have learned their lesson. It is always the ideal which alone is ultimately good and divine, and it is the ideal which never wholly exists in the things of time and space—"Why callest thou me good? None is good save one"; that is the message of all. And here it matters not what kind of beauty we are considering, whether the beauty of reason or holiness or social happiness, or of schemes of line and colour or of harmonious sound.

The author's philosophical standpoint rests on a careful distinction between two ways in which "outward" experience may be related to "inward"—it may be instrumental or symbolical—it may "express" an ideal or it may "signify" it. Thus the world may be regarded as the instrument of a divine purpose or as the symbol of an eternal divine goodness; and theistic hypotheses fall into two classes "according as they incline to take either instrumentality or significance to the fundamental type of relation which unites the world to God." This relation between outward and inward is the basis of all sacramental attitudes; and to these two types of relation correspond the two types of sacramentalism—the æsthetic and the ethereal. For the former, sacraments are *signa*; for the latter they are also *efficacia*. But the Christ-life is the one complete sacrament, the perfect embodiment of divine value (both as beauty and as moral goodness) in terms of spatio-temporal experience; and we think of "Incarnation" or of "Atonement" according as we are thinking of that life as "signifying" the divine goodness or as the instrument of its operation. In the latter aspect it involves the Cross, as the essential means for love's conquest; and this moment is also involved not only in the highest moral effort, but in rational and æsthetic achievement. "Just as the true Saviour came not to call the righteous but sinners, so the true artist comes not to record the beautiful but to convert ugly things into the service of beauty; and the method of redemption is all one." (Canon Quick, like the Bishop of Manchester, whose line of thought is closely similar, is very strongly under the influence of Bradley's 'Shakespearean Tragedy'.)

True sacraments involve both these moments, of significance and instrumentality. They "both repre-

sent some universal relation of human life to God through Christ, and also, in thus representing all life, make life worthy to be thus represented." It is not possible in a short notice either to follow out the rest of the argument or to discuss several points of detail which might seem to invite criticism. We can only commend the book very warmly as an honest and brilliant essay in the philosophy of Christian worship.

## PLAYS AND POEMS

*Three Plays.* By Edna St. Vincent Millay. Cape. 5s.

*White Harvest.* By Percy Ripley. Published by the Author. 3s. 6d.

MISS EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY takes pleasure, as a poet should, in childish things; and one cannot help seeing intention behind the fact that in this little volume of three plays she saves the best till last. We begin with 'Two Slaterns and a King,' a tiny morality play too slight and trite for criticism. The one-act piece that follows, 'Aria Da Capo,' strikes a profounder note. It shows the comedy of Pierrot and Columbine interrupted by Cothurnus, under whose direction Thyrsis and Corydon, the two simple shepherd boys, play a tragic piece which ends with their killing each other. The dead bodies are left under the table, to be discovered by Pierrot and Columbine on their re-entry. Pierrot shouts out to Cothurnus that he must remove them, adding (being an American Pierrot): "The audience wouldn't stand for it!" But Cothurnus, off stage, answers:

What makes you think so?—  
Pull down the tablecloth  
On the other side, and hide them from the house,  
And play the farce. The audience will forget.

It is the business of the dramatist to remind the audience of significant things that it is apt to forget, and Miss Millay's third play, 'The Lamp and the Bell,' is rich in such reminders. The theme is the love between Beatrice and Bianca, the daughter and the step-daughter of King Lorenzo of Fiori. In Bianca's absence from the Court, Beatrice is wooed by Mario, king of a neighbouring province; but it is Bianca whom he ultimately weds. On the eve of the wedding the girls exchange vows of lifelong love, for Beatrice is as generous as Bianca is innocent:

BIANCA: . . . I shall never think of you  
Throughout my life without such tenderness  
As breaks the heart,—and I shall think of you  
Whenever I am most happy, whenever I am  
Most sad, whenever I see a beautiful thing.  
You are a burning lamp to me, a flame  
The wind cannot blow out, and I shall hold you  
High in my hand against whatever darkness.

BEATRICE: You are to me a silver bell in a tower.  
And when it rings I know I am near home.

Miss Millay's verse achieves neither exquisiteness nor splendour, but it possesses a vigour and a flowing grace that are more than equal to the demands she makes of it, and it is agreeably spiced with wit.

In Mr. Percy Ripley's work, although it is for the most part conventional, both in thought and diction, there sounds so clear a note of sincerity that one cannot doubt the genuineness of his poetic impulse:

O loveliness I cannot keep  
That on the sad slow tides of sleep  
Moves far away,  
Thy source is the unfathomable deep  
Beneath our clay,  
Thy end  
Unmeasured in the night and day.

This is our destiny,  
Rooted in earth, yet high in dreams  
We go,  
Neither bond nor free,  
Skull and star alike we bear,  
Time and Eternity.

This is neither new nor profound, but it is unpretentious and straightforward and free of meretricious epithet. Things better than this, and things less good, are here; too often the expected adjective heralds the expected noun; but an austere intention is apparent, and the poet displays already a sense of verbal economy which may serve him well when his art matures. He sees in the poem called 'Vision':

In all things a skull,  
On every skull a flower,  
Below, the lapsed slime,  
Lower yet and higher  
Invisible streams of power.

Young poets have had visions less significant than that.

## TRADE UNIONS AND THE LAW

*Trade Unions and the Law.* By Arthur Henderson. Benn. Paper, 6s.; Cloth, 8s. 6d.

THE need for an intelligible explanation of trade union law, as modified by the new Act, is obvious enough, and in providing one Mr. Henderson has done a useful piece of work. It would have been more useful still if he had written dispassionately, instead of from a partisan Labour point of view, which gives him a distinct bias towards exaggerating the restrictive effects of the yet untried enactments, and leads him to underrate the results of the inclusion of lock-outs, which in certain circumstances would be very far-reaching. A Socialist Government dictating measures in the direction of Communism might well be as grateful for the legal muzzling of the adversaries' economic power as a reactionary government trying to force down wages. No doubt this has very little to do with trade unions in the sense that concerns this book, but if the purely political side is to carry as much weight as it clearly has done with Mr. Henderson, such considerations cannot be disregarded.

To expound the law on so complex a subject is such a difficult task that it is no disgrace to Mr. Henderson to have turned out rather an extremely handy manual for the every-day management of trade union affairs than a text-book of any legal importance. In fact upon certain points even rough-and-ready demands will hardly be satisfied. Take the following passage, where the author supplies evidence leading to his own conviction:

The Act defines that a trade dispute is "not to be deemed to be within a trade or industry, unless it is a dispute between employers and workmen or between workmen and workmen in that trade or industry which is connected with the employment or non-employment or the terms of the employment, or with the conditions of labour of persons in that trade or industry." It follows, therefore, that, even though the strike be confined to those engaged in a particular industry (sometimes called a primary strike), yet if the object of the cessation of work be other than simply a dispute with the employers over conditions of work, such cessation of work will now be unlawful.

The words we have put into italics seem to us a very inadequate paraphrase of the clause just quoted, and they illustrate the author's tendency—no doubt unconscious—to paint the new Act as black as he can under the pretext of interpreting it. Again, the status of national trade unions in the Irish Free State is certainly a difficult question, but it ought to be tackled or not tackled. Mr. Henderson writes almost throughout on the assumption of an undivided Ireland ruled from Dublin Castle.

## AN EASTERN ISLE

*Romantic Java as it Was and Is.* By Hubert S. Banner. Seeley, Service. 21s.

THIS work is the offspring of a writer who has spent twelve years in the island of Java, but it is not clear in what capacity he was there, nor what opportunities he had of intercourse with the natives.



If one may judge by the amount of space devoted to the various topics, the author has seen a good deal in different parts of the island of what might come within the ken of every globe trotter, but he has had no opportunity of getting on intimate terms with the real unadulterated native.

Although he has referred to a good many writers on Java, Mr. Banner does not succeed in giving an adequate account of the origin of the Javanese; in fact what he says is not even consistent. At the outset he pins his faith to an incursion of comparatively civilized people of Malay stock many centuries before the Christian era, and these colonists are presumed to have found wild aborigines of unspecified race in possession; two pages later Raffles is quoted in favour of the view that the present inhabitants owe their origin chiefly to a Tartar immigration; this stock is the same as was called Malay two pages earlier.

It is clear that the author supposes the Hindus to have found the comparatively civilized stock mentioned above, but when he comes to speak of literature he says that they found in Java a people of very low intellectual order; however, though the general reader would not suspect it, this passage refers, not to the immediate predecessors of the Hindu immigrants, but to the aborigines who, living side by side with neighbours higher in the scale of civilization, appear to be still in existence at the present time under the original name of Kalang.

In his attempt to cover as much ground as possible, the author often passes over matters on which information would be far more interesting than, let us say, the adventures of seasick pigs or the fate of ownerless dogs. There are a good many stories from the East Indies of mysterious phenomena apparently akin to those attributed to *Poltergeists* in Europe. Mr. Banner mentions a case of this sort cited from a novel, and says that he spoke to a credible witness who had had some personal experiences. Instead, however, of recording the events in detail, the author says he will not attempt to explain the trick, but suggests as an explanation that a Javanese bathroom has a ventilator high up on the wall. It is true that the scene of one of the cases was a bathroom, but the explanation is not convincing even for this individual occurrence, much less for the whole class. The author's treatment of such stories is characteristic of his superficial and rather lazy method of work.

It is clear that the Dutch have many problems to solve in present-day Java; there are, for instance, incredible numbers of half-bloods; but Mr. Banner nowhere tells us what is done to educate the Eurasian nor how he earns his daily bread. He has a little more to say about the Communists, though even here the information is rather of the type of a day-to-day newspaper report than a considered judgment. It is by no means clear whether the uprising was of native origin, furthered by subsequent aid from Europe, or whether it was engineered from Europe in the first instance. We learn indeed that the agitators are mostly outsiders, but as it is also stated that they are of half-breed Dutch descent this does not carry us much further.

The style of the book is unpretentious, but occasionally the author fails to make his meaning clear. What, for example, are the "hieratical posturings" of a dancing girl? Fulsome praise is an intelligible term, but what are "fulsome extracts"?

The work is illustrated by plates and line blocks, but some of the former are too small to show detail; the latter, though not very meritorious as art, are mostly clear and effective. One shows a scorpion committing suicide; but it has been asserted that the scorpion is immune to its own poison, and it would have been interesting to have some evidence that the cause of death is not the fire which surrounds the creature.

## SEA ADVENTURES

*A Great Sea Mystery.* By J. G. Lockhart. Allan. 6s.

*Sea Escapes and Adventures.* By "Taffrail." Allan. 10s. 6d.

SEA mysteries must always have one great advantage over mysteries of land or air—that it is so much easier at sea to dispose of the corpse. And it is not only a question of corpses. Every lost rowing boat, every missing liner, every poor derelict found threshing about the ocean, perfectly seaworthy but without its crew—the secret of each one of these tragic misadventures lies hidden only a few yards beneath our feet as we cross and recross the waters in our comfortable liners. We cannot come at it, and we probably never shall until the sea gives up its dead.

But there is another special element of mystery about these sea problems which is not found to the same extent elsewhere, and that is the extraordinary confusion of the evidence and the almost incredible carelessness with which subsequent commentators have made it worse confounded, by misstatements of their own. There seems to be no accounting for this. Take the case of the *Mary Celeste*, probably the most famous derelict that ever sailed the seas. In describing her appearance when found, no mention is usually made of such material facts as the damage to her bows, or that one of the hatches had been thrown off; even her name is wrongly spelt; and almost invariably, by way of emphasizing the mystery of the crew's disappearance, it is asserted that "the full complement of boats was hanging at the davits."

But Mr. J. G. Lockhart, who has been pretty thoroughly into this fascinating case, shows that the only boat the ship possessed had disappeared, and that no eye-witness ever suggested anything else! The legend has sprung up since. Even Mr. Lockhart cannot resist the temptation to hold back this decisive fact for a dramatic appearance in his last chapter. Indeed, half the mystery of these sea problems is due to their popular treatment. But Mr. Lockhart, in this lucid and careful summary of the case, shows, at any rate, that it is possible to be accurate and entertaining at the same time. The solution of the mystery which he finally adopts is one put forward by Dr. Cobb, a relative of the lost captain of the *Mary Celeste*.

Dr. Cobb thinks that there was an explosion among the barrels of alcohol which formed the cargo; that the crew, in a panic, launched their boat and pulled rapidly away; that a further explosion forced off the hatch and let fresh air into the hold, thus dispersing the gases which had formed and removing the danger; and that a sudden breeze then filled the brig's sails and bore her away before the crew could get back. It sounds very stupid behaviour on the part of the mariners, but it is undoubtedly the most plausible explanation offered yet of the sudden desertion of the *Mary Celeste*. Of what eventually happened to the captain, his wife and child, and his crew, the sea holds the secret.

"Taffrail's" collection of escapes and adventures ranges between the case of the *Peggy* (a horrible story of cannibalism among a starving crew) in 1765, to the quite recent rescue of the airman, Hawker, from the Atlantic. It includes Shackleton's Elephant Island adventure, the escape of the *Junco* from Toulon during the Napoleonic wars and of the *Calliope* from the great hurricane at Samoa in 1889. Some of these incidents were, perhaps, too recent to need re-telling; but the account of Shackleton's exploit is particularly well done, and may, in this form, reach a class of young readers who otherwise would have missed it.

"Taffrail," like Mr. Lockhart, is always careful, without ceasing to be readable. His "sea-escapes" have at least one feature in common—that they are so hair-breadth, so near to the miraculous, as almost to deserve to rank as "mysteries" alongside the case of the *Mary Celeste*.

### ITALY TO-DAY

*Italy To-day.* By Sir Frank Fox. Jenkins. 10s. 6d.

THE publication of this book coincides with the news of Mr. G. B. Shaw's correspondence with the secretary of the Labour and Socialist International, in which Mr. Shaw, to the horror of some of his friends, has been seen to pour the balm of his approbation upon the Italian Prime Minister. Such news is by no means irrelevant to the consideration of this book by Sir Frank Fox, whose information tends to support an opinion held for some time past by foreigners that Fascism is essentially a Socialistic organization, denying individualism in the name of the State.

Not all the information given here is equally convincing. Two quotations, of a general and a particular nature respectively, will show that this interesting and lively book must be read with caution. "Making all allowance for the fact that a critical spirit is not encouraged in Italy to-day, I cannot avoid the conclusion founded on this series of casual conversations, in which I sought to discover some hints of discontent, that the ordinary citizen has a sense of benefit and no sense of grievance." The italics are ours. "All allowance" implies so wide a reservation as to nullify what follows. "All allowance" must be allowed to include personal terror lest unguarded words be reported with speedy and painful results.

"The Camorra to-day is practically extinct," says Sir Frank Fox. Is it? We can well believe that criminal organization does not flaunt itself with its pristine impudence, for Italy is now governed in a sense of the word completely new to her history; but its extinction can certainly not be taken for granted. Another point—one of far-reaching importance for the future—that may be questioned: the author touches the fresh admission to the Fascist clubs which, he tells us, "have been discouraged, or actually vetoed, on the argument that a sufficient time has elapsed since 1922 for genuine Fascists to have declared themselves." But an inherent weakness in the movement as at present developing lies in the widespread joining up to the ranks of Fascismo of men for their personal safety and expedience. While admitting that Fascism accepts a constitutional monarchy "without any real power," Sir Frank Fox entirely overlooks a future in which the present Heir-Apparent may well play a vigorous part, backed by an extreme personal popularity.

Regarding the concrete achievements of the movement since 1922 the author, on solid and undebated ground, tells us clearly and concisely how Signor Mussolini has saved the country, has wrought improvement in many directions, and has inculcated a methodical and confident spirit among the people. No longer is it necessary for a carpenter (as happened to our knowledge in 1921) to go about his work with a loaded revolver, nor is the foreign resident likely to overhear an argument between railway porters as to which of his bedrooms would prove the most comfortable when the revolution came and all the "rich," native or otherwise, were thrown out into the street. Whether the material improvements in Italian industry and commerce have in them the seeds of permanence Sir Frank Fox cannot tell us. Who can? The Duce is without question a Cæsar, but, following him—as has been asked before—where is Augustus?

### NEW FICTION

BY L. P. HARTLEY

*Shaken by the Wind.* By Ray Strachey. Faber and Gwyer. 7s. 6d.

*I Speak of Africa.* By William Plomer. The Hogarth Press. 7s. 6d.

*A Fairy Leapt Upon My Knee.* By Ben Howe. Chatto and Windus. 6s.

'SHAKEN BY THE WIND' is concerned with the religious currents and the religious hysteria that swept America during the first half of the nineteenth century. Delaware had remained immune from the inroads of civilization, ignorant with a strong unchosen ignorance, infinitely more honourable than the complacent rejection of the unknown which is the key-note of the prosperous and prospering American religious intolerance of to-day.

Thomas, *l'homme moyen sensuel*, amiable, friendly, possesses just those qualities of charming weakness that turn with age and trials to vanity and petulance. Sarah, his wife, is driven with an ever-increasing yearning and an integrity that nothing can undermine to search for a final solution that may dignify this life and make sure of the next. Sarah is a memorable figure. Never for a moment does she turn into wood or cardboard. There is about her religious intensity just that touch of waywardness which makes her gusty religious searchings convincing, and her practical wisdom is never without a tenderness and humour, far removed from the stock tenderness and stock humour of the "dour" in fiction:

The Lord's voice was none too plain; either it conflicted with her own judgment, in which case it was very hard to accept it; or it ran along with her wishes, in which case it was hard to believe it the Lord's.

In the Delaware of the 'forties the smallest doctrinal distinction represented the difference between Heaven and Hell, but religion was also the one force outside and beyond everyday life—the only outlet, the only escape, from the trite, the sordid and the dull, the sole receptacle for the vague aspirations of the imagination. No wonder that revivalism and revivalists flourished, that false prophets were almost as necessary as true ones, that the "only truth" was rediscovered in new forms each year.

Into this world Rufus Hollins and his patron protégées, the Misses Thrush, settle. A vague scandal—rapidly represented by his devotees as persecution for righteousness' sake—has driven him from his last cure of souls. Very quickly, with a humour that is more of a ripple than an emphasis, Miss Strachey shows us the havoc wrought by Rufus. First Thomas succumbs and turns into a vain, inflated, but—owing to his genuine sincerity of each moment—an immensely successful preacher. Then Lottie, his adopted daughter, loved by and loving his son Edmund (a rather unconvincing prig), is slowly undermined: it being understood that she has been chosen by the prophet and that to her the inner mysteries will be revealed. Quietly and powerfully Miss Strachey envelops her community in the mists of the shameful and the nameless.

Thomas is a convert to the new doctrines. "It is necessary to get rid of shame," Miss Patience Thrush says. "We found that by practice it was becoming easier. How can the soul be free if the body is not?" He is ruined by a practical demonstration with one of his converts. Rufus having announced the coming of the Messiah forms a community of the truly elect, taking the terrified Lottie with him while Edmund follows to watch over his beloved. From now on the story moves with great power to the moment when Sarah arrives to rescue her son and



Lottie dies giving birth to the Messiah (a still-born daughter).

This inventory gives a very poor idea of the quality of the book; the sure characterization, direct and subtle, the even excellence of the style which is always quiet enough for each point both to stand out and to fall into its place; the streaks of madness and sincerity in Rufus himself. 'Shaken by the Wind' is in a different class from 'Elmer Gantry.' Mr. Sinclair Lewis takes the most brilliant shots of our time. When he attacks, he attacks with all the fury and knowledge of a man who is fighting himself. Miss Strachey loads no dice. Serene, detached, economical, sensitive, her insight never fails, her humour never obtrudes, her tenderness never falters. Almost alone among American writers she possesses the gift of irony. In addition to all of which, Sarah and her sister Anna are among the most delightful women ever created by woman.

Mr. Plomer speaks of Africa, but often one wishes he would be silent, so ugly and harsh and disagreeable are the things he has to say. Like many modern writers, he feels he does well to be angry, and it is with little sorrow and little sense of responsibility that he gives life, or at any rate African life, such a bad name. Unpleasant images and unpleasant incidents seem to rise naturally to the surface of his mind:

And there are groves of wild bananas everywhere, which on still days are green, but which on windy days are blown back so that they show their silvery undersides, like dead fish floating in a whirlpool. . . .

When she laughs the sound is like the leavings of a vegetarian dinner of turnips and milk choking their way down a sink. . . .

She can see quiet and luxurious motor-cars following one another up the approach, with sombre regularity, like deadly thoughts succeeding one another in an unconscious brain. . . .

Three large cockroaches ran across Dirk's face, one after the other, and a baby began to chew his bootlaces.

This bias in favour of the disagreeable would be more impressive if one felt that it was part and parcel of Mr. Plomer's mental attitude, something temperamental and inalienable. But the preface makes me doubt this. Mr. Plomer would surely have done well to suppress his *naïf*, youthful, rebellious foreword, with its curious mixture of vain-gloriousness, impertinence and bad taste:

In 1926 I began, together with my friend Mr. Roy Campbell, the first literary movement in South Africa. The reader may find it strange that we should have thought it worth while to pay any respect to culture in that colony. . . . We consequently resigned, abandoning *Voorslag* to this commercial dignitary, a genial and respectable trades-person, to whom I conceded the right of publishing the conclusion of *Portraits in the Nude*. . . .

"Trades person!" "Conceded!" Could vulgarity and vanity go further? I heartily wish that dignity, geniality and respectability, even commercialism, figured more largely in Mr. Plomer's acrid, uncomfortable pages. That he has wit, incisiveness, a quick eye, and a power of summarizing character and incident in the fewest possible words I readily (to borrow his own term) concede. He is right in thinking himself an artist of quite unusual gifts and "the first literary movement in South Africa" (Olive Schreiner was merely a woman of genius, not a movement) is in capable hands. But besides his obvious gifts he has many tiresome affectations, of which printing a couple of lines in the middle of a page and leaving the rest blank, is the least: for the space is harmless compared with what Mr. Plomer is capable of putting into it. I concluded the reading of 'I Speak of Africa,' bored, disgusted, and respectful.

At any time, but especially in such a context, Miss Bea Howe's 'A Fairy Leapt Upon My Knee' comes laden with a sense of healing and refreshment. Like many allegories, it is a little difficult to follow; it has a quality of mistiness, like a night in early autumn, which is agreeable but also delusive. William and Evelina were lovers. William was a moth-collector, or

rather an entomologist; to be as dry-as-dust was his danger. Evelina was proud, sensitive, exquisite, very conscious of her emotions, but very unwilling to communicate them. Without being unduly impressionistic, Miss Howe succeeds in giving a vivid impression of the interior of a mind; and Evelina's mental state was one into which a fairy might easily enter, so accessible was it to romantic imaginings and delicate waifs of thought. As a matter of fact it was William on whose knee the fairy leapt, William who had taken it for a moth and never stopped (probably) wanting to classify it. Its presence in his library brought about a breach between the lovers. Quite how this happened, or rather what part the fairy played in it, is a secret that Miss Howe enjoys but does not fully communicate to her readers. With so concrete a fairy, surely the relations of the lovers should have been proportionately easy to grasp: Miss Howe does not quite elucidate them. But she is true to her own wayward humour, and it is a pleasure to follow it with her, through meanderings that are subtle as well as sinuous.

## OTHER NOVELS

*Meet Mr. Mulliner.* By P. G. Wodehouse. Jenkins. 7s. 6d.

This is thoroughly authentic Wodehouse, in his most uproarious mood. It is, throughout, wildly impossible, beyond even the somewhat uncertain limits of extravaganzas. A sort of continuity is imposed on the nine episodes of which the book is composed by the

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personality of Mr. Mulliner, who relates them in a village inn as the adventures of members of his family. This is, unlike 'The Small Bachelor,' a book to be read in snatches, and we hazard an opinion that it was written in the first instance for periodical publication. That is not a denunciation but an explanation of its peculiar qualities. And these exaggerations of Mr. Wodehouse's power of exploiting the humorous situations he has created show how great is his gift of humour.

**The Murder at Fleet.** By E. Brett Young. Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.

A famous psychologist disappears and is found murdered and fastened up as a scarecrow. He had in his house his wife's brother, a shell-shock patient dumb and paralyzed, whom he had hopes of curing. All the available witnesses are people of well-known and irreproachable antecedents, and there seems to be no clues to the murderer. The mystery is attacked by a local reporter and one of his Oxford friends calling in a former don of their college in aid. The chief sport in the tale is to spot the criminal, and this ought to be done half-way through, though more clues are duly given right up to the end. A good story.

**Inspector French and the Starvel Tragedy.** By F. W. Crofts. Collins. 7s. 6d.

We do not remember a more complete problem set for the ingenious reader than this story presents. A country-house far away from its neighbours is found one morning in ashes, its three inmates being almost entirely cremated. The inquest verdict is "Accidental death." A local bank manager some weeks later finds some reason for suspicion, and ultimately our old friend Inspector French is called in. The clues throw suspicion on one person after another, including one of the supposed victims, another corpse is found near the ruins, and not till the end is the real murderer discovered. The book ranks among the best detective stories of the year.

## SHORTER NOTICES

**The Roman Campagna in Classical Times.** By Thomas Ashby. Benn. 21s.

UP to late medieval days the Campagna was rich and fertile; in the Renaissance it was the source of much of the classical statuary which adorned the Roman palaces and from thence travelled over Europe; for centuries it lay waste scourged by fever and malaria; to-day, restored to salubrity, the steam-plough and tractor are rapidly obliterating the traces of centuries of neglect, and in a few years the Campagna of the nineteenth century visitor will have ceased to exist. Dr. Ashby has an intimate, almost a life-long knowledge of the country and its history, though in this book he does not touch on the story of its dark ages; he has arranged his matter on the scheme of the great roads radiating from Rome, and has followed their by-ways and traced their course where they no longer exist; and he has illustrated the itinerary with excellent photographs of the less-known villages and Roman remains. Visitors to Rome and its environs should make a point of reading what Dr. Ashby has to say before taking the excursions which are now open to them in various ways. Their pleasure will be quadrupled.

**The Walnut Collector.** By MacIver Percival. Jenkins. 7s. 6d.

THIS, a new volume in the Collectors' series, is a remarkable book for the price. There are thirty-two excellent plates in half-tone, and a number of line drawings illustrating walnut-wood furniture of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The scope of the work is modest. Mr. Percival addresses his observations to the practical collector of moderate means, and he tells him much that is useful and is prodigal of hints which ought to save a wise beginner from making expensive mistakes. Chapters are devoted to various prices of furniture, chairs, tables, and so forth, there is a useful glossary, and some excellent advice upon preservation and repair. The author would seem to be more of an expert than a connoisseur, and his own experience as a collector is generously given to his readers. Remarkable luck in the matter of bargains still pursues observant buyers, who, however, may be saved a great deal of time and expense

by carefully noting the authentic methods of construction detailed in this book.

**The Ormond Poets.** Nos. 1 to 6. Shakespeare: 'Songs and Verses from the Plays.' Blake: 'Selected Poems.' Cowley: 'A Selection of Poems.' Shelley: 'Selected Lyrics.' Drayton: 'A Selection of Shorter Poems.' Herrick: 'Selected Poems.' Edited by G. D. H. and M. I. Cole. Douglas. 1s. and 2s. each.

THESE are small pocket volumes, each containing sixty or so pages of closely and clearly printed verse, and they appear in two styles: the one (at a shilling) with trimmed pages and a Japon Vellum cover exquisitely decorated in gold, the other uncut and bound in green cloth. One is tempted to suggest that the books themselves, rather than their authors, should have borne the proud burden of the title. But this is a small grievance, and there remains nothing but praise for the skill and taste with which editors and publishers have done their work.

Mr. and Mrs. Cole have exercised a nice discrimination in their choice of poems. Their first volume, however modest, is a distinguished addition to Shakespeare anthologies; several little unexpected fragments of the plays are included, as well as the matchless songs, and each number is followed by the name (in discreet italics) of the singer or speaker. Equal adroitness is displayed in the other volumes; and we are especially delighted to see that the Blake selection includes from 'The Marriage of Heaven and Hell,' the magnificent 'Song of Liberty' and the seventy proverbs.

**Jane Austen.** By R. Brimley Johnson. Sheed and Ward. 5s.

JANE AUSTEN remains, for all the commentators, one of the most elusive figures in English literature. The recent publication of 'Love and Friendship' may have helped to dispel to some slight extent the mystery that surrounds her character, but she still refuses to come within those categories that are so convenient to the biographer. Working on the material supplied alike by her novels and her letters, Mr. Brimley Johnson has sought to reconstruct the figure of Jane Austen. At least, he has supplied us with a portrait that is probably not very unlike the original. He defends his subject warmly against the charge of religious indifference that has been so frequently levelled against her. It is indisputably true that the incumbents and curates of her novels are profoundly unmoved by the deeper problems of life and that "her heroines seldom investigate their own souls, or question their right to happiness." All this, however, Mr. Johnson holds to be irrelevant. "We have so entirely lost touch with the atmosphere of universal orthodoxy, or the assumption that all men are Christians," he writes, "as to forget that it was once possible to believe and be virtuous without talking about it." This defence appears to us more plausible than convincing. Jane Austen in all probability accepted without question the religion of that period, and the religion of the opening years of the last century might be not unfairly described as morality untempered by emotion. It needed the Evangelical Revival and, later, the Oxford Movement to awaken the country from its spiritual torpor. But whether one agrees or disagrees with Mr. Johnson, it is only fair to say that he has written a study of Jane Austen and her times which is both suggestive and stimulating.

**Elegies and Eulogies.** By Charles L. Graves. Methuen. 5s.

MR. CHARLES GRAVES is one of the most dexterous rhymsters living. It is reassuring to find that the passing of the years has not diminished Mr. Graves's fund of high spirits. *Punch* would be noticeably the poorer without him: he ranks high among our laughter-makers. At the same time, an element of seriousness lurks behind his funniest efforts. Jackie Coogan worship, the pretentiousness of the "Bloomsbury set" and that bane of maturity, the "modern woman"—all come in for a measure of polite castigation. He has a catholic appreciation of music which ranges from Bach to the Co-optimists. When Mr. Graves tries to be funny he always succeeds: he is sometimes less successful in his more serious moments. A novel feature of the book is an "index of worst lines."

**A Sea Chest.** Compiled by C. Fox Smith. Methuen. 5s.

IN compiling an anthology of ships and sailormen Miss Fox Smith has had an almost bewildering choice of material upon which to draw. She has delved deep and has brought up some treasures both rich and curious. Old ballads and sea chantes alternate with extracts from the Bible, from the poetry of Longfellow, or the prose of Dickens. Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner'—or a considerable part of it, at least—is inevitably here. Less widely known is 'The Liverpool Packet,' with its rollicking chorus:

Bound away, bound away where the wild waters flow,  
She's a Liverpool packet—oh Lord, let her go!

Full justice is rendered to sea novelists—Marryat, Dana, and Herman Melville. Miss Fox Smith is certainly not wanting in courage, as she remarks of the last-mentioned writer that "the glorious plums his books contain are sometimes buried in a sorry deal of indigestible transcendental pudding." As may be. What is relevant is that Miss Fox Smith is to be thanked for the "plums" which she has handed to her readers: we are glad to note that among them is her own 'Mainsail Haul.'



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## THE QUARTERLIES

The *Quarterly* for October covers a wide range of subjects. It opens with a comparison of the characters of Napoleon and Wellington, much in favour of the latter. Mr. Bensusan reviews the main features of Agriculture this year. Colonel Whitton writes on 'The Mystery of Strategy,' criticizing severely the time wasted on the study of wars fought with ancient weapons and restrictions. He tells the story of how a Rhine ferryman held up a body of Austrian troops by refusing to allow them to cross without payment—and they submitted. Mr. Sampson writes on 'Music and the Plain Man' and Mr. Sargeant on 'The Greek View of Life'—perfectly reasonable and strictly limited. Mr. Moss contributes a devastating review of Mr. Perry's 'Theories of Civilization,' impugning the facts put forward to prove them, the theories themselves, and the historical methods of study. Other papers deal with Egypt, Labour Legislation, Empire Defence, and the July Revolt in Vienna.

The *Edinburgh* opens with an account of British dealings with the Persian Gulf by Mr. H. D. G. Law. Mr. Carew Hunt studies with full illustrations the theories of 'Montaigne and the State' as compared with those of the publicists of his day. Mr. W. J. P. Wright describes 'Humanitarian London from 1688 to 1750,' and incidentally shows how great was the improvement in the public conscience. Mr. Bryden is good and entertaining on 'Foxhunting, Past and Present,' and Mrs. Evelyn goes through the records of 'English and Scottish History' in search of good things. Mr. Disher contributes to the history of the Circus in 'Napoleon's Wars at Franconi's'; Mr. King revives the memory of the adventures of 'The Princesse des Ursins'; the Bishop of Durham writes on Quakerism; and the Editor on 'The House of Lords.'

*Science Progress* has a paper on 'The Beginnings of Medicine: Medicine and Surgery in Ancient Egypt' by Mr. W. R. Dawson, based on a fresh study of the papyri; a paper on the growth and use of sisal under the title 'A Vegetable Mother'; 'An Aspect of the History of Atomism' by Mr. J. C. Gregory; and an interesting study of 'Recent Applications of Sound Propagation' by Dr. E. G. Richardson. In addition there are the usual abstracts, essays and reviews.

The *Church Quarterly* opens with a study of Anglo-Catholicism by a Lutheran professor. Mr. N. E. Swann examines 'The Politics of Dante'; Canon Addleshaw writes on 'Modern Novels and Christian Morals'; Canon Smith on Keble and the Centenary of 'The Christian Year'; Dr. Clarke on Eighteenth-Century Pious Books; and Mr. Gardner on 'The Religion of William Blake.' The specialist reviews and lists of papers are good, as usual.

The *Hibbert Journal* celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary this number. Prof. Herford writes on Blake; Dr. Sperry considers the relation of religion to historical fact; Prof. Bacon writes on 'The Elder of Ephesus and the Elder John'; Prof. Stroemholm queries whether the writers of the Epistles knew the Gospel Narrative; and there are other most valuable papers.

The *Journal of Philosophical Studies* contains a review by Prof. J. S. Mackenzie of present tendencies in Speculative Philosophy; Prof. Reyburn continues his study of Knowledge; and Sir O. Lodge writes on 'Life and Matter,' emphasizing the persistent reality of personality. Prof. Lossky considers the limits of biological evolution, and Mr. MacMurray studies 'Government by the People' as understood from the times of Rousseau to the present day.

The *New Adelphi*, with a slightly larger page, opens with the first of a series of papers by Mr. F. M. Cornford on 'Psychology and the Drama,' dealing first with Comedy. Mr. H. M. Tomlinson writes a war story; Mr. James Young describes his experiences of the Gurdjieff 'Experiment at Fontainebleau.' Mr. Murry writes on 'The Parables of Jesus' as a proof of the existence of a single author, and he also inaugurates a section 'Shakespeare Notes' to provide a home for details of Shakespearean study. Special attention is given to reviews.

*Antiquity* contains a most valuable study of 'Prehistoric Agriculture in Britain' by Mr. E. Cecil Curwen, illustrated by air-maps, drawings, and figures of the "caschrom" or foot-plough still in use in Skye. Mr. Curle describes the curious Scottish "Buschs"; Mr. F. T. Petrie deals with the prehistoric remains (from paleolithic onward) of Northern Galilee; Miss Caton-Thompson shows the utility of the motor-car in desert work in 'Explorations in the Northern Fagum'; and Mr. R. G. Collingwood is a severe critic of 'Oswald Spengler and the Theory of Historical Cycles.' The Notes are interesting and the Reviews reflect the views of experts on contemporary writings, good, bad, and indifferent.

The *Print Collectors' Quarterly* opens with a study of 'The Navy in Caricature,' by Comm. Robinson. Mr. Campbell Dodgson pays a tribute to a great artist in his way in 'The Etchings of Theodore Roussel.' Mr. Murdoch discusses 'The Prints of David Allan,' and Mr. R. A. Walker 'The Etchings of H. S. Brown.' The quality of the miniature reproductions is excellent.

*Foreign Affairs* (U.S.A.) opens with a study by Prof. Coolidge of Franco-British relations for the last twenty-five years. The other papers deal with the Economic Conference, Africa, M. Poincaré, China, Oil, Submarines, Canada, Rasputin and the Empress, the Scheldt, Minorities in Czechoslovakia, and other economic subjects, all by acknowledged experts. It is an indispensable element of current research.

The *Cavalry Journal* contains papers on the Cossacks, Recollections of a Prussian Hussar, An Irish Leader of Austrian Horse, A Cavalry Division in War, Horse Racing through the Ages, and a number of other papers interesting not only to the professional soldier, but to every one who loves a horse. It is extremely well illustrated.

*Psyche* contains papers on 'Colour Sensations'; by Sir Richard Paget on 'The Origin of Language' (most interesting and original), on Spenglerism (critical) and on 'Consciousness, Motivation and Emotion.' A very good number.

The *Sociological Review* has papers by Sir Francis Young-husband on 'The Perfect Country'; Mr. G. W. Thompson on 'Professional Workers and Organization'; Mr. Manniche on the Danish Peasant; and Prof. T. D. Eliot on 'The Ethics of Birth Control.' Some posthumous papers by Mrs. Branford are also printed.

The *Bulletin* of the John Rylands Library contains, as usual, a number of most valuable papers. Prof. B. S. Alexander on 'Art and Nature,' Dr. Herford on 'Shakespeare and the Arts,' are lectures given at Manchester. Dr. Rendel Harris has a paper on 'Glass Chalice of the First Century,' describing the Wiegand cup and other similar ones and suggests the Grail was a glass vessel. He does not mention the Lucca vessel. Dr. Peake writes on 'Elijah and Jezebel'; Mr. Fish on 'The Cult of King Oungi,' and there are some new numbers of the invaluable 'Woodbrooke Studies.'

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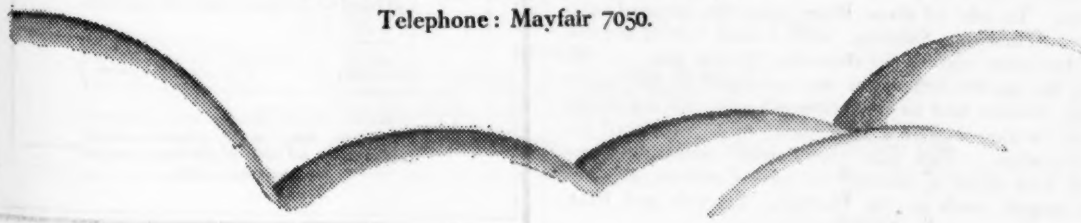
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## MOTORING

BY H. THORNTON RUTTER

OLYMPIA closes to-day and no doubt a great many would-be buyers will be pleased that the bewildering show is over and that they can go home and decide which car they really think most suitable for their purpose. The difficulty about motor exhibitions is to choose what you like best at the price you can afford to pay. This year, the chief difficulty of the visitor to the show was to make up his, or her, mind which of the entirely new British six-cylinder cars he, or she, would like to own. Each had particular advantages, just as each had its particular disadvantages. Thus the new fifteen-horse-power rated Alvis had overhead valves, while the seventeen-horse-power Arrol-Aster had single sleeve valves; the new eighteen-horse-power six-cylinder Morris had an overhead cam shaft, while the twenty-horse-power Vauxhall had a submerged one in the sump. Irrespective of price, there was sufficient difference in the design and construction to make a buyer hesitate, if he had no decided preference for one particular valve action. To add to these, there was the fifteen-horse-power Armstrong-Siddeley, with a side valved engine, and the new sixteen-horse-power Austin also of this type, but as the latter was not exhibited at the motor show, visitors had to be contented with the assurance of the catalogue that it was about to be produced for next season. This was the British contingent and there was quite a number of new Continental sixes also staged, such as the Darracq, Renault and Fiat, to complicate matters still further.

It was particularly noticeable, however, that coil ignition was being favoured for these new sixes, as against the magneto, due, no doubt, to the prevailing craze for three miles an hour on top gear in almost any conditions except climbing steep hills. The magneto usually wishes to turn a bit faster than this, unless it is particularly set, which does not improve it, as a rule, for the maximum top speed performance. For this reason also, I found the polar inductor magneto being used when this was the form of ignition provided, with revolving magnets and stationary armature in place of the ordinary orthodox type, with fixed magnets and revolving armature. The reason for this is that the polar inductor magneto gives four sparks per revolution of the magnets and need therefore turn only at three-quarters the speed of the crank shaft. On the whole, however, coil ignition is coming back again to popularity, not only because it is independent of the engine speed in producing its spark, but also because electric batteries are now perfectly trustworthy and the dynamos provided are capable of keeping them fully charged with the minimum of attention. The ignition enthusiast, however, who pins his faith on one type is usually antagonistic to the other, so even this detail was an embarrassment.

\* \*

Most, if not all, of the new French chassis were equipped with an air filter, a fuel strainer and an oil purifier, and while one or two of the new British models incorporated these items, they were very much in the minority. America first introduced this system of cleaning the air before it enters the gas chamber, and indifferent refining of petrol and the possibility of impurities occurring in the oil necessitated the standardization of these equipments to cleanse both gas mixture, fuel and lubrication mediums.



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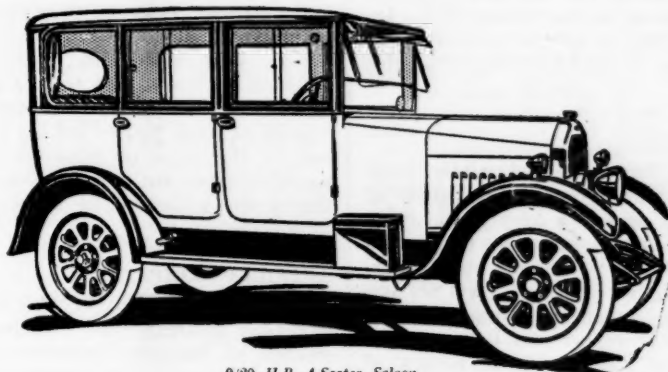
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## CITY NOTES

*Lombard Street, Thursday*

**A**MONG the issues that made their appearance at the beginning of the present week was that of the County Borough of Birkenhead, which made an issue of £1,000,000 5% redeemable stock, the price of issue being 101½. I have frequently in the past referred to Corporation Loans and their suitability as investments. I draw attention to the Birkenhead Loan on account of its price. While obviously it is beneficial for Corporations to borrow money as cheaply as possible—the charges for their loans have to be borne by the rates—surely the lender of the money deserves a certain amount of consideration; and, to invite subscriptions to a loan for a Corporation at a price which is higher than that of 5% War Loan after allowing for accrued interest, seems to be erring on the side of undue optimism. Corporation Loans some months ago were becoming popular mediums for investments—a very desirable state of affairs. This movement will be entirely killed if these issues are made at a price such as the one under discussion. It would appear probable that the keen competition that has arisen during the last year or so for this class of business has led to the recent offer. Investors will be well advised to abstain entirely from such issues unless they are made at a more reasonable price.

## TAYLORS CASH CHEMISTS

The 1s. shares of Taylors (Cash Chemists) Trust continue in demand and are now not far short of 10s. Although this may appear a very extravagant price for a 1s. share, I am assured by those who should know that the Trust is making such amazing profits that not merely is the present level not too high, but is likely to be exceeded within the next twelve months. When the report and balance-sheet appear next March it is estimated that profits of over 150% on these deferred shares will be shown.

## ASSOCIATED ANGLO-ATLANTIC

There has been increased interest this week in the shares of the Associated Anglo-Atlantic Trust. This Trust, among other valuable assets, is largely interested in cement shares and newspaper shares. Reports of a very favourable nature have reached me with reference to its prospects, and despite the recent rise I am of opinion that these shares should not be sold as they are likely to reach considerably higher levels in the course of the next few months.

## BRITISH CEMENT

The British Cement Produce and Finance Company, which is believed to be interested in Greaves, Bull and Lakin, the Holborough Cement and the Ship Canal Cement Company, will, some time next month, declare its dividend for the past year. News reaches me that the profits made by this concern have surpassed the most optimistic forecasts, with the result that when the dividends are declared both the Deferred and the Ordinary shares will look undervalued at the present level. While on the subject, the three cement companies above referred to are making good progress, and it seems probable that despite the fact that this group has been established comparatively recently,

they are destined to play a very important part in the future of the cement industry in this country.

## GOODE, DURRANT AND CO.

Goode, Durrant and Company have issued their Report and Balance Sheet for the year ended July 20 last. This Company's business, which is that of wholesale merchants, importers and warehousemen in this country and in Australia, continues to progress satisfactorily. For the twelfth year in succession Ordinary shareholders are to receive a dividend of 10%. The Reserve Fund remains at £280,000.

## HIS MASTER'S VOICE

Reference has frequently been made in these notes to the shares of the Gramophone Company (His Master's Voice) and the Columbia Graphophone Company, the price of both of which have been rising steadily for some months. That this rise has been based on something more substantial than sentiment is disclosed by the Gramophone report for the year ended June 30 last now to hand. Shareholders receive a final dividend of 32½%, making, with the interim dividend of 7½% previously paid, a total of 40% for the year, which compares with 20% for the two preceding years. The net profits for the twelve months under review amounted to £752,216, which compares with £309,650 for the previous year and £266,088 for the year ended June, 1925. After doubling the dividend no less a sum than £593,826 is carried forward as against £282,611 brought forward. The publication of these figures has led to a further substantial rise in the price of gramophone shares, and there would appear no reason why those who hold the shares for a permanent investment should consider selling.

## AMERICAN INTERESTS

It is interesting to be able to record the greatly increased interest that has been shown of recent months by American investors in English industrial shares. The substantial rises that have occurred in gramophone shares, Celanese shares and match shares, bears out this statement, as all these companies are favourites with the American investing public. It is difficult to forecast in which fresh directions American attention will be focussed. I would not be surprised to hear of American buying of some of our store shares and newspaper shares, and I anticipate a day when American investors will realize the cheapness of some of our heavy industrial's and will endeavour to take a hand in their rejuvenation.

## PRO-PATRIA

The allotment of shares in the recently issued Pro-Patria Film Company discloses how very largely this issue was over-subscribed. This Company, which is to act as a film distributor, has signed an agreement for ten years with the British Instructional Film Company, as a result of which the Pro-Patria Company will deal with the distribution of the British Instructional films throughout the world. It would appear that these 5s. Pro-Patria shares are likely to pay very substantial dividends, and those who favour this class of investment should not be deterred by the existing premium from making a purchase, as a considerably higher price is probable in the course of the next six months.

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## Company Meeting

## ANGLO-SOUTH AMERICAN BANK

The THIRTY-NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Anglo-South American Bank Ltd. was held on October 18 at Winchester House, E.C. Mr. J. A. Goudge, C.B.E., presided owing to Mr. R. J. Hose (the chairman of the bank), although present, suffering from a severe cold.

The Chairman read the address of Mr. Hose, in the course of which he said:

Presupposing a period of peace in industry, during which all parties will work together for the recovery of our vital export trade in an atmosphere of sympathy engendered by recognition of the interdependence of their interests—and assisted, it is to be hoped, by the strict adherence of both national and local governing bodies to a policy of economy in administration and abstention from legislation likely to prove repressive to industrial enterprise—there still remain other aspects of the problem of recapturing old markets and finding new outlets for our manufactures. Speaking only in regard to Latin America, much would be accomplished by a closer study by British exporters of market conditions there. Insufficient attention has perhaps been paid on this side to the considerable growth in Latin American countries of newly-formed manufacturing industries, which those nations have shown a natural tendency to foster by means of protective tariffs. While this has resulted in some cases in the loss of markets for certain finished articles, one effect has been to increase the import demand for machinery and industrial equipment generally. At the present time competition in Latin American markets is extremely keen, and not infrequently price considerations weigh more heavily than those of quality. Our competitors, particularly those from the United States, have established sales organisations at an extremely high level of efficiency, accompanied by intensive and continuous propaganda, and these are methods which British exporters cannot afford to neglect.

Turning our attention now to the balance-sheet, I will deal first of all with the transfer of the sum of £800,000 from reserve fund, utilised to provide for the amount of depreciation of capital employed abroad by this bank directly and through its affiliated and auxiliary institutions. In this connection I would like briefly to recall my remarks at our last few annual meetings dealing with the line of policy which we have endeavoured consistently to pursue in this regard. At our meeting in October, 1923, I stated that the question of the depreciation of capital was one that should not be dealt with year by year because it was of a very fluctuating kind, and to adjust it would completely alter the whole aspect of our then-published balance-sheets and prevent shareholders from being able to gauge the actual results of our banking operations. Two years later I touched upon the manner in which we were dealing with the impending stabilisation of the Chilean exchange at 40 pesos to the £, and emphasized that we did not propose to deal with capital in other countries until there was some definite similar statutory fixing of the value of the local currency upon which a permanent calculation could reasonably be based. The example of Chile in returning to a gold standard of currency and a stabilised exchange has since been followed by other countries in which we chiefly operate, and has enabled your directors in the present balance-sheet to deal in a comprehensive manner with the depreciation of our capital invested abroad.

The item of bills payable shows a decrease of nearly £2,500,000—this is due only in part to a decline in the volume of business, the main cause being an alteration in the method of remittance of funds, as we now find a distinctly growing tendency to utilize in this connection telegraphic transfers rather than drafts. Current, deposit, and other accounts show a satisfactory increase of over £4,000,000, and although a part of this is naturally due to the inclusion in our accounts for the first time of the figures of the Central American branches opened in October last—to which I referred in my speech a year ago—I am pleased to be able to inform you that, apart from this feature, there is an actual expansion in the item in question.

With regard to the asset items of cash, bills receivable, and British Government securities, the total of these shows very little variation from that of a year ago and represents 56 per cent. of our liabilities on current, deposit, and other accounts. Practically the whole of the item of British Government securities consists of holdings of short-term bonds, &c.

Both gross profits and charges show increases, which again is partly due to the inclusion of the Central American branches. Those branches have made satisfactory progress, although, naturally, the full benefit could not have shown itself in the short period which has elapsed. In common with many other institutions, we find that, in spite of continued efforts towards economy, the cost of providing the services to our customers to which we consider they are entitled still tends to expand.

We are continually studying means of economising without impairing efficiency, and we have now definitely arranged to fuse the businesses of the British Bank of South America Ltd. and ourselves in Argentina.

I now have the pleasure to move: "That the report and balance-sheet as distributed be adopted, and that a final dividend of 5s. per share, less income-tax, be and is hereby declared payable on the 24th instant."

The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

## Company Meetings

## BUENOS AYRES AND PACIFIC RAILWAY CO.

The ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of the Buenos Ayres and Pacific Railway Co., Ltd., was held on the 15th inst., at Winchester House, Old Broad Street, E.C., Viscount St. Davids (chairman of the company) presiding. The Chairman said that taking the past year as a whole, the results were eminently satisfactory. The gross receipts were a record for the Pacific system, taking that system alone, and not including the times when they had also worked the Bahía Blanca and Transandine lines. As to the bad points, the frost had resulted in a decrease of 100,000 tons in the despatch of wines from the Mendoza district. In the Province of San Juan, on the other hand, there had been an increase of 32,000 tons of grapes, there having been a wonderful crop there. There had also been a decrease in fresh fruit, but, on the year as a whole, those decreases had been compensated for by a record maize traffic and by a general improvement all over the system—what he might call general development. Specially good traffics in the year were in lime, stone, onions and other vegetables, and salt. As regarded future developments, there was a new industry in the canning and drying of fruit, before which there ought to be a very great future. A sugar beet factory was in course of erection, and that would be an entirely new business.

The most gratifying feature of all was that the country was becoming increasingly alive to the value of irrigation, progress being made in several provinces. He did not put very much stress on mineral developments, although, speaking broadly, there was no doubt that the land at the far end of their system was mineralised. The country as yet, however, was very little known, and it would be many years before it was surveyed. Its mineral future would largely depend upon whether petroleum was found in bulk. He thought it would be found in bulk, and that in a generation's time whoever presided over the meeting of this company would have a great deal to say about the mineral traffic.

Shareholders would no doubt ask him to sum up as a whole, and he would say that, taking the good points with the bad points as far as he could judge them, he would hardly expect that the company would enjoy as favourable a year in the current year as it had done in the period under review, but, having damped the spirits of the shareholders in that respect, he would hasten to add that he felt quite sure all the same that their dividend would be maintained. He moved the adoption of the report and accounts.

The resolution was seconded by Mr. C. E. Gunther and carried unanimously.

## BUENOS AYRES WESTERN RAILWAY

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Buenos Ayres Western Railway, Ltd., was held on October 18 at River Plate House, E.C.

Mr. Follett Holt, M.Inst.C.E. (the Chairman), said he hoped the shareholders would consider as satisfactory the results now submitted. The dividend had been maintained at 7 per cent., £100,000 had been placed to reserve, and the carry-forward had been increased by £112,000 to £178,000. The financial position of the company remained sound, and, in view of the shocks and rebuffs since 1914, the directors were happy in being able to show by the accounts that that was the case.

Summarising the year's results, he pointed out that, although the wheat and oats carried showed a falling off, full compensation was found from linseed and maize, the total grain traffic showing a satisfactory increase. They had more than held their own with livestock and passenger traffic; the ton-mileage dealt with was the largest in the company's history; and the net revenue was the highest so far recorded. It was interesting to note that, in this year of record effort and result, they had earned a return on the capital employed of 6.1 per cent., and he thought they could justly claim that this fine railway had been built up and organized, and had become one of Argentina's great national highways, with the minimum of financial onus to that country. Under the influence of an up-to-date service the suburban passenger traffic continued to expand.

With regard to the Argentine oil company owned jointly by the Great Southern, the Pacific and themselves, shareholders would be glad to know that the latest developments and earnings were entirely satisfactory. In the Buenos Ayres Midland Railway, in which they were interested jointly with the Great Southern, better results had been obtained, and the weight of their guarantee appeared at last to have become negligible.

As to the immediate future, although there had been a shortage of rain in some sections, the reports of the coming crops were satisfactory. The cattle industry was also progressing satisfactorily, and the general situation appeared to be quite normal. For the first three months of the financial year they had no reason to complain of the results, and if all went well with the crops the directors would be able to meet the shareholders next year with a satisfactory report.

The report was adopted, and it was unanimously resolved that Sir Henry Bell (the late Chairman) be presented with his portrait, to be painted by some eminent artist, and that a replica be placed in the Board room.

## ACROSTICS

## DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 292

TWO POTENTATES WHO IN ITALIA REIGNED,  
BUT NOW THEIR SUN HAS SET, THEIR GLORY WANED.  
WASHED BY TWO SEAS THEIR FAMOUS CITIES LIE,  
ONE 'NEATH THE NORTH, ONE 'NEATH THE SOUTHERN SKY.

1. A plant in which we ships and rogues may see.
2. Detach two letters from a long-lived tree.
3. Not Satan's self is less a child of light.
4. When day is waning, then we this recite.
5. Behead an ape—in Borneo you'll catch him.
6. For fat and fun it would be hard to match him.
7. Multiplication, I have heard, is this.
8. As wife to Edwin, had not been amiss.
9. Take it you sometimes may, or you may go it.
10. Behead what pay we ought to if we owe it.
11. Gauzy, and holding what? You may not care one.
12. Yours can't take place, sir, till you've found the fair one.

## DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 290

HISTORIC ENGLISH HOUSE, IN DERBYSHIRE WELL KNOWN;  
AN ORIENTAL KING WHO SAT ON ASSUR'S THRONE.

1. Held as a living pledge in hostile hands.
2. Skill such as frequently success commands.
3. A play, and in it you'll espy a sheep.
4. With this oppressed, what wonder if we weep?
5. Curtail an error that the best may make.
6. A Latin song well suited for a wake.
7. Half-buried in the snow the youth I found.
8. Insensate, stupid, not of judgment sound.
9. From beast ferocious now abstract an n.
10. Common in gardens, worn by holy men.

## Solution of Acrostic No. 290

H ostag E <sup>1</sup> An elegy or funeral song.  
A droitnes S <sup>2</sup> A traveller, by the faithful hound,  
D ram A Half-buried in the snow was found.  
D olou R Longfellow, 'Excelsior.'  
O versig Hu  
N eni A<sup>1</sup>  
H oun D<sup>2</sup>  
A ddle-pate D  
L i On  
L aw N

ACROSTIC No. 290.—The winner is Mrs. Wilson Frazer, 6 College Gardens, Dulwich, S.E., who has selected as her prize 'History of the Great War. Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1915.' Compiled by Brigadier-General J. E. Edmonds and Captain G. C. Wynne, published by Macmillan and reviewed in our columns on October 8 under the title 'Neuve Chapelle and Ypres.' Nineteen other competitors chose this book, 20 named 'On a Paris Roundabout,' 13 'Aristophanes in English Verse,' 11 'Oil!' etc.

ALSO CORRECT.—Armada, Barberry, Mrs. J. Butler, Cyril E. Ford, W. E. Groves, Iago, Jop, Madge, G. W. Miller, Peter, Quis, C. J. Warden, Yendu.

ONE LIGHT WRONG.—Baldersby, A. de V. Blathwayt, Boskerris, Mrs. Robt. Brown, Carlton, Miss Carter, Chailey, A. R. N. Cowper-Coles, Dhualt, Doric, C. Ellis, Estela, Lt.-Col. Sir Wolseley Haig, J. B., Jeff, John Lennie, Lilian, Mrs. A. Lole, Muriel M. Malvern, Margaret, Martha, Miss J. F. Maxwell, N. O. Sellam, Rikki, Sisypheus, St. Ives, Hon. R. G. Talbot, Twyford, Zyk.

TWO LIGHTS WRONG.—Ape, Bolo, Mrs. Rosa H. Boothroyd, Candida, Ruth Carrick, J. Chambers, Chip, Maud Crowther, D. L., Farsdon, Glamis, Hanworth, H. F. B. C., Miss Kelly, Kirkton, A. M. W. Maxwell, Rand, Shorwell, Spyella, Stucco, H. M. Vaughan, Capt. W. R. Wolseley, Yewden. All others more.

For Light 2 Address is accepted; but, as several competitors point out, Despair is not so good as Dolour. We speak of being oppressed with grief, but for Danger, Disaster, and Despair the word is not strong enough, and something more than tears seems requisite to meet them with. Aptness and Astuteness are inferior to Adroitness; Astuteness often over-reaches itself and leads to the reverse of success.

MARGARET.—You misunderstood my note; I was referring to all those solvers who had "Two Lights Wrong," not to you.

J. B.—Our next Quarterly Competition will begin on November 26.

YENDU.—Yes; the Das-adder certainly proved "a serpent in the way" of some of our solvers. I never heard of the reptile before.

MARTHA.—Of course it had to be a Hound (in Longfellow's poem) to rhyme with found. If the incident had occurred in London the poet might have written:—

The traveller by the faithful dog  
Was found half-stified in the fog.

H. F. B. C. and KIRKTON.—Demogorgon does not appear to be a demon at all. Satan finds him standing by the throne of Night and Chaos with Rumour, Chance, Tumult, Confusion, and Discord. My dictionary calls him "a mysterious divinity, by some regarded as the author of creation." Why you should imagine him to be worse than Moloch, Chemosh, Belfal, Beelzebub, Mammon, and the rest of Satan's peers, I do not know.

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Edited by H. M. Swanwick

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**The British Empire and the Others**

By THE EDITOR

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